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Politicising *Antigone* in Twentieth-Century Europe: From Hegel to Hochhuth

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Signed declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.

Signed:

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Edinburgh, 30/08/2018

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Abstract

My PhD thesis explores the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in twentieth-century Europe and focuses on the process by which *Antigone* is established as a canonical drama of political resistance. I argue that the reasons behind *Antigone*'s relevance in the modern day can be detected in the specific political reading of the play originated in the early nineteenth century thanks to Hölderlin's and Hegel's interpretations, which influenced a large number of later adaptations and reworkings of *Antigone*. This reading is favoured by the inherent political features of the play itself and its interaction with the history of the twentieth century. By focusing on a selected number of twentieth-century versions of *Antigone*, I clarify the ideologies and contexts which influenced the process of politicisation of the ancient play. Furthermore, I explore the peculiar approaches and techniques adopted by each author in modernising the play's conflicts and I investigate how twentieth-century versions reflected, departed from, or reconfigured the original.

My dissertation is divided into three main parts. In the first part, I introduce issues of historicism and classical reception theory. This analysis is followed by a discussion of the *Antigone* of Sophocles in its ancient context, which evaluates the complexities and key themes of the original that have led later authors to emphasise different aspects of the play's conflicts. The second part focuses on the reception of *Antigone* before the twentieth century, to demonstrate how *Antigone* was received differently before its politicised variant began to be established. Hölderlin and Hegel were first to engage with the Sophoclean original – rather than with later reworkings – and emphasise the relevance of the political aspects of the play to a contemporary context. After the outline of the origins of this model, the third part focuses on how *Antigone* was received in the larger political climate of twentieth-century Europe. This part of my survey is divided into four sections, each devoted to a particular historical moment: the First World War, the inter-war period, the Second World War, and the period after the wars, establishing the First and Second World Wars as landmark moments in the canonisation of *Antigone* as political play of resistance. Through my investigation, I demonstrate that *Antigone* is established in this century as the canonical drama of conscientious resistance to arbitrary and autocratic authority.

Lay Summary of Thesis

Sophocles' *Antigone* has been translated, performed, and appropriated again and again across space and time. Authors are continuously enlisted to write, imagine, and stage new versions of *Antigone* around the world. My thesis analyses how and why this particular Classical text, the *Antigone* of Sophocles, is so popular and influential today. In my study, I argue that Sophocles' *Antigone* matters today because it has become a "canonical" political play, representative of political resistance against tyranny. The political aspects of the play itself (Antigone's transgression of the law and her defiance of tyranny, the role of the individual in the community) have favoured various political interpretations and have provoked broader questions of leadership, civic duty, and women's role in society. This "politicisation" first began in the late eighteenth century thanks to a poet (Hölderlin) and a philosopher (Hegel). They were first to engage with the Sophoclean original – rather than with later reworkings – and emphasise its relevance to contemporary political events (in particular, the French Revolution). This political interpretation then influenced a large number of playwrights and authors in their approaches to the play. In my thesis, I focus in particular on a number of versions of Sophocles' *Antigone* written and staged in the twentieth century and I investigate how they reflected, departed from, or reconfigured the original. I argue that the specific historical context of the twentieth century, characterised by wars, dictatorships, and resistance, has further "politicised" the play and granted its relevance in the modern day. Sophocles' *Antigone* and the political tradition began by Hölderlin and Hegel appealed to modern audiences and led to the creation of the iconic adaptations (such as Anouilh's and Brecht's *Antigones*) that form our modern conceptualisation of *Antigone* – a play of political resistance and dissent.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Questions, Aims, and Context

Athol Fugard, the author of an adaptation of the *Antigone* of Sophocles written during the apartheid period in South Africa, claimed that *Antigone* is the "greatest political play of all time".[1] The political relevance of the ancient tragedy, considered by Hegel the closest to perfection,[2] has led to a fruitful interaction with the present, facilitated by the urgency of political situations in the contemporary world. In the last century alone, the Sophoclean tragedy was translated over fifty times into the English language.[3] The play's spread and influence are not confined to the Western world. *Antigone* attracted cross-cultural appeal even outside Europe, where it has been exploited as a vehicle for contemporary political critique.[4] The ambiguities of the play and its political themes (Antigone's fight for "human rights" and autonomy, her defiance of authority) enabled different authors to respond to various historical instances and political contexts, ranging from Jean Anouilh's adaptation in wartime Paris, to Bertolt Brecht's adaptation in post-war Germany, and Griselda Gambaro's Argentinian version, *Antígona Furiosa* – to name a few.

At different times and in different places, *Antigone* has communicated something different. Despite this versatility, certain characteristics of her tragic persona – her defiance of tyranny, her rebellious spirit, and her claim for human freedom – have been appropriated again and again, thus exemplifying the existence of

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[1] Fugard (2002), 132. Athol Fugard's *The Island* was first performed in Cape Town in 1973. On the reception of *Antigone* in Africa, see section 3.5.2. of this thesis.

[2] Hegel (2001), 74. Hegel's idealisation of *Antigone* has been criticised by modern feminist and philosophical interpretations. See section 3.5.4.

[3] See Wilmer and Žukauskaitė (2010), 1. See also the rich and continuously updated database of theatrical versions contained in the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama website (APGRD). I shall refer to *Antigone* as either a "play" or "tragedy" rather than "myth" because in defining its reception I am not referring to the wider mythical Theban saga but specifically to the Sophoclean "variant" of the myth. On the mythological background to which *Antigone* belongs, see section 1.2. of this thesis.

[4] Several books, including *The Athenian Sun in an African Sky* (2002), *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds* (2007), and *Crossroads in the Black Aegean* (2007), deal with the worldwide reception of Greek tragedy (including *Antigone*) in African countries. The same phenomenon in the American world is discussed in Banuls and Crespo (2008); Pianacci (2015); Bosher *et alii* (2015).

"fugitive humane communalities" occurring across history.[5] However, in order to understand why, among all the other Greek tragedies performed and adapted to the modern stage, the *Antigone* of Sophocles figures so prominently, it is necessary to bring distance from the idea of *Antigone* as a universal, timeless model.[6] Its ideas continue to persist and resonate today, as they did in the fifth century BC, but they have been both reconfigured and revisited by playwrights and authors in correspondence with crucial historical moments. The emphasis on and selective recovery of certain aspects of the play reveal a politicisation of the *Antigone* story.

The process by which *Antigone* became established as a canonical play to express political resistance and its reception in the twentieth century are the subject matter of this study. The main contention of my thesis is that *Antigone*'s relevance in our contemporary world is discernible in the variety of political readings first created in the early nineteenth century, which have irremediably shaped the way later authors experienced the play. The reading of *Antigone* as iconic play of political resistance has prevailed in later centuries in which authors have re-politicised the original, offering distinctively personal readings in response to the urgency of current political situations. Due to these later politicised appropriations, which have themselves become iconic texts, and because of the relevance of the original itself to recurrent political circumstances, *Antigone* continues to play a central role today, both across and within history.

In order to explore the process of politicisation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, which has led to its transformation into one of the most significant plays in the theatre of political protest of the twentieth century, I compare a selected set of twentieth-century versions and analyse them within the ideological, cultural, and political settings that produced them. These versions have been selected because they were instrumental to the process of politicisation of the play and its establishment as a canonical text for the expression of political resistance. In particular, I argue that *Antigone* reached its form as a canonical play of political resistance thanks to the iconic adaptations of *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh (1944) and Bertolt Brecht (1948), which influenced many subsequent

[5] Martindale (2013), 173.
[6] Mee and Foley (2011), 5, argue: "*If* there is anything 'universal' about *Antigone*, it lies in the way both the play and the character have been mobilized."

adaptations of the play. Indeed, these versions do not represent a dead end, but rather a platform for the iconic re-evaluations and re-interpretations of the play that followed and reacted to the Second World War. In particular, the view of the Nazi regime and the Second World War represented in Anouilh's and Brecht's works was supplanted by later understandings and representations, as I shall show in the final part of my thesis.

That *Antigone*, in particular (amongst the other surviving Greek tragedies), is relevant today is proved by the large number of studies and recent contributions to the reception and revisioning of Sophocles' play in the modern world. Steiner's seminal book *Antigones* (1984) is still an essential contribution to the study of *Antigone*'s reception in the Western tradition. Steiner was alert to the politicisation of the original, and his book remains one of the most important contributions to the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*. However, he did not highlight the impact of Hegel's reading of the tragedy on later productions nor did he explore the influence of *Antigone* beyond Europe, despite the importance of the European colonial enterprise in defining the West.[7] A more recent and illuminating (though rather brief) account of the play's modern reception is offered by Cairns (2016) in the final chapter of his book on Sophocles' *Antigone*, which outlines the main trends of reception of the play from antiquity to the present day.[8] His study, however, is intended as an introduction for the general public and is primarily concerned with an analysis of the play itself rather than its reception. The second part of Goldhill's book, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* (2012), is also dedicated to the reception of Sophoclean tragedy. Combined with an analysis of the complex irony and language of Sophocles' plays, Goldhill's survey explores the pervasive influence of Hegel and German Idealism in shaping modern ideas of tragedy.[9] His study, however, focuses especially on the "cultural

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[7] Although he dedicates a detailed section to the analysis of Hegel's reading (see pp. 20-46), Steiner also produces the debatable claim that "Hegel's uses of Sophocles are not immediately pertinent to a study of the 'Antigone' motif in Western thought"; Steiner (1984), 28. As Fradinger (2014), 236, remarks, Steiner mentions only Kemil Demirel's Turkish *Antigone* and Athol Fugard's *The Island*. Another (now dated but still) important contribution is Fraisse (1966), which focuses on the reception of *Antigone* in France, and Fraisse (1974).

[8] Cairns (2016), 122-54.

[9] See especially chapters 6 and 7; chapter 9 is dedicated to modern feminist critics of Hegel's reading of *Antigone*. Goldhill focuses especially on Hegel's reading, whereas he does not analyse the play's reception more broadly in the twentieth century, as this study does. Goldhill (2012), 151, mentions "Hölderlin's characteristic version" only briefly. The "longstanding relationship that *Antigone* has had

history" of the Sophoclean language and sense of "the tragic" constructed in the nineteenth century, whereas my thesis is exclusively dedicated to the reception of a single play, *Antigone*. Billings' and Leonard's *Tragedy and the Idea of Modernity* (2015) also focuses on the philosophical tradition concerning Greek tragedy, particularly in Germany, and its influence on ideas of modernity.

In contrast to these studies, I am interested in exploring the process by which *Antigone* is established as a canonical political play, representative of political resistance against tyranny. My research aims to engage with and further develop Cairns' and Goldhill's insights by not only investigating the origin of the current interpretative model of Sophocles' *Antigone* in particular (rather than Sophoclean tragedy in general), but by also engaging with specific examples of *Antigone*'s reception in the twentieth century. I shall show that our "modern" *Antigone* has not always been a political play of resistance in defence of human rights. Rather, it is the product of a long history of politicisation and interaction with current historical events as well as previous traditions and appropriations.

Furthermore, as recently as 2017 some important volumes were published on the reception of *Antigone*, including the chapter on *Antigone* in the recent *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles*,[10] Morais', Hardwick's and Silva's volume on Antigone in Portugal, as well as Cairns' book on *Antigone* published the year before (2016), which has a chapter on reception (chapter 5). Other valuable contributions to the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*, in Italian, include Ciani's *Antigone: Variazioni sul Mito* (2001), a survey of versions preceded by a short general introduction, Belardinelli's and Greco's *Antigone e le Antigoni: Storia, Forme, Fortuna di un Mito* (2009), and Fornaro's *Antigone. Storia di un Mito* (2012). Sophocles' *Antigone* is extremely popular in the philosophical tradition as well. Three contributions, which offer a rich outline of the interpretations of *Antigone* in the philosophical, psychoanalytical, feminist, and political tradition, were published in 2010 – Wilmer

with German philosophy" has also been recognised by Taxidou (2004), 18, in her discussion of *Antigone* and the philosophers. Another important contribution, in German, dedicated to Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger, and Orff is Pöggeler (2004).

[10] For the chapter on *Antigone*, see Silva (2017a), 391-474. Silva's contribution, despite various spelling mistakes (e.g. "*Soron* Kierkegaard", "Francesco *Bianci*", "*Antigona.* Storia di un Mito"), gives great attention to Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American versions; see Silva (2017a), 412-32.

and Žukauskaitė, [11] Söderbäck, and Hutchings and Pulkkinen. Chanter's and Kirkland's *The Returns of Antigone* (2014) also collects a number of interdisciplinary essays on *Antigone*'s revival in current philosophical and postcolonial traditions.

Great attention has also been dedicated to the play's influence in the contemporary world. Duroux and Urdician offer a detailed survey of post-Second World War productions of the play in *Les Antigones contemporaines* (2010). The essays on *Antigone* in performance edited by Mee and Foley in 2011 have brought attention to the performance history of the play throughout the modern world.[12] Their "performance-oriented look at *Antigone*" must be understood as a reaction to approaches that privilege the text at the expense of the performative act and it is most effective for modern productions for which information on the text is scant or the script unpublished.[13] Similarly, Fischer-Lichte's recent book *Tragedy's Endurance* (2017) focuses on landmark performances of Greek tragedies on German stages since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

This rapid sketch of the main reference books in the study of *Antigone*'s reception confirms the inexhaustible appeal of the Sophoclean tragedy which, especially in this last century, has instigated considerably different and varied debates and interpretations. In contrast to these studies, I have chosen to offer a literary and political, rather than a performance, analysis of *Antigone*'s reception, focusing on how twentieth-century versions reflected, departed from, or reconfigured the original. My text-based approach allows me to analyse the text of each version in close comparison to the original, examining what has been kept as opposed to what has been reconfigured or omitted. The divergences from the original often reveal a politicisation of the ancient tragedy as well as highly innovative, political, and ideological ways of mobilising the original and its conflicts. The main contention of this thesis is that an

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[11] Part 4 of Wilmer's and Žukauskaitė's book, dedicated to "translations, adaptations, and performance", is particularly relevant for my study. It focuses on a selected number of versions of *Antigone* staged around the world, ranging from the twentieth to the twenty first century.

[12] An earlier contribution to the performance reception of Greek tragedy is McDonald (1992). See also Hall and Macintosh (2005), focused on British theatre, Flashar (2009), in German, dedicated to the reception of Greek drama especially in Germany, and Smit's *Handbook on the Reception of Greek Drama* (2016).

[13] However, there are published editions for a good number of *Antigone*-plays, and an anthology of five *Antigones* from South America translated into English is being prepared by Fradinger. Moreover, because this topic is highly contemporary, most of the authors and playwrights studied in Mee's and Foley's work are still alive.

approach that combines a textual analysis with a focus on the political aspects of the *Antigone* can offer a fruitful perspective for the study of the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the twentieth century.

1.2. Outline of the Work

My dissertation is divided into three main parts. In the first part, I introduce issues of historicism, Classical reception theory, and theatre studies, which inevitably have a bearing on my topic, in order to shed light on the reasons behind *Antigone*'s politicisation and its persistent impact on modern thought and culture. How different writers treat a Classical work, how the specificity of the historical moment and previously layered receptions influence an artist in his engagement with the classical past, and similarly related questions are traditional topics scrutinised by Classical reception studies. My argument, which aims at establishing how and why a particular Classical text, the *Antigone* of Sophocles, is so popular and influential today, inevitably reverberates within contemporary debates on the Classical tradition and reception studies, which concern themselves with "the ways in which Greek and Roman material has been transmitted, translated, excerpted, interpreted, rewritten, re-imaged and represented".[14] Therefore, even though an account of Classical reception studies is beyond the scope of this study, I shall briefly mention the major theories and methodologies of reception studies that inform this thesis – which is in itself a product of this time and place – at the end of my introduction.

This discussion is followed by an analysis of the *Antigone* of Sophocles in its ancient context, which evaluates its ambiguities and key themes, in order to establish a general framework for the understanding of the Sophoclean original in its fifth-century BC context. My own interpretation of the play will resurface in the later chapters as I explore twentieth-century versions and the ways in which they reflected or departed from the original. Particular attention is given to the political aspects of the original, which were most influential in shaping the current interpretative model of a politicised *Antigone*.

[14] Hardwick and Stray (2008), 1.

The second part of my thesis investigates the reception of the *Antigone* before the twentieth century. This allows me to show how the play was received differently before its politicised variant began to be established. The dominant interpretation of *Antigone* in the centuries prior to Hegel emphasised the "Christian" and "Romantic" aspects of the ancient myth and conflated later reworkings (especially Statius' *Thebaid*) with the original. This is evident for example in the adaptations of Robert Garnier (1580), Jean de Rotrou (1639), and Vittorio Alfieri (1782).

Rather than focus on these interpretations, I shall pay particular attention to the main philosophical theories that developed around the Sophoclean play in the early nineteenth century. These readings, affected by the political circumstances of the French Revolution and the rise of philhellenism, contributed to the establishment of the iconic model of a political *Antigone.* In particular, *Antigone* became the great twentieth-century play, which still affects us today, thanks to two interpreters: a poet (Hölderlin) and a philosopher (Hegel). Hölderlin's and Hegel's influential interpretations represent landmark moments towards the conceptualisation of *Antigone* as a political play. They were first to engage directly with the original in its genuine form rather than with later reworkings of the myth (such as Euripides', Seneca's, and Statius' versions of the Antigone story), as previous operatic treatments did. Thanks to Hölderlin and Hegel, Sophocles' *Antigone* took on a new, political, and contemporary relevance, which paved the way for later reinterpretations. In the twentieth century, authors distanced themselves from Hegel's more abstract and universalising view of *Antigone* and further politicised the original.

The *Antigone* by Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn, staged in Potsdam in 1841, was the first production that applied Hölderlin's and Hegel's philosophical readings to the staging of drama in a contemporary context. This production was symptomatic of the philological interest in antiquity and the attempt at authenticity and faithfulness to the original. It is particularly important because of its political ambivalence (evident in contemporary reviews) and because it linked the philosophical readings of Hölderlin and Hegel to the practice of performing drama on the stage.[15]

[15] As noted by Goldhill (2012), 231.

Having outlined the origins of the interpretative model of a politicised *Antigone*, the third part of my study explores how the play was received in the larger political climate of twentieth-century Europe. By analysing different case studies, I show how the peculiar political framework of this century provided the ideal background for a re-proposition of the play on the stage. I pay particular attention to the ideological specificity of each version and I emphasise the different, even opposite interpretations and propagandistic uses of the ancient tragedy produced in this century. Each case study illuminates the impact of the political and historical context in which each version was written.

My survey is divided into four sections, each devoted to a particular historical moment: the First World War, the inter-war period, the Second World War, and the period after the wars. In my analysis, I establish the First and Second World Wars as landmark moments in the canonisation of *Antigone* as political play of resistance. In each sub-section, I focus on a number of authors that have been selected as representative of the crucial process of politicisation of Sophocles' *Antigone* initiated by Hölderlin and Hegel.

Following the chronological order of the texts, my survey begins with a notable example of the political and Expressionist reception of Sophocles' play: Walter Hasenclever's *Antigone* (1917). War and enemy occupation are the defining contexts in Hasenclever's version, which explicitly invokes and expands the political questions introduced by the play. Written during the First World War, at the height of the Russian Revolution, Hasenclever's tragedy becomes a battle-cry against the principle of power, manifested in the dictatorship of Creon and his followers. Antigone appears before the audience as a fiery revolutionary and social agitator. The grim atmosphere of German society at the time is reflected in this work, as well as the trauma of losing a kinsman in the trenches. Hasenclever's version anticipates the study of later reproductions of *Antigone* and lays the ground for the formation of a paradigmatic model of what an *Antigone* should be that matters today.

The second section introduces a number of versions written in the inter-war period: Jean Cocteau's adaptation (1922), Arthur Honegger's opera (1927), and António Sérgio de Sousa's *Antigone* (1930). These rewritings show how *Antigone* was used by different authors for contrasting ideological and political purposes. In his

abbreviated remaking of *Antigone*, Cocteau's aim was to restore the Classics to contemporary audiences and to put modern dress (designed by Coco Chanel) on ancient characters. The French author modernised the language of the play and gave his characters a subversive colloquial language, which contrasted with the solemnity and gravity of tragedy. He intentionally emphasised his non-conformity to the current interpretative model of *Antigone* as figure of dissent and resistance, dominant in twentieth-century France. Honegger adopted Cocteau's abridged text and set the play to music. When revived in 1943, during the German occupation of France, Honegger's opera was a success: because the author highlighted the ambiguities of the original and gave a more sympathetic treatment of Creon, the play was uniformly accepted by pro-Nazi and collaborationist critics. By contrast with Cocteau's apolitical version and Honegger's accommodating opera, Sérgio's Portuguese *Antigone* offered a clear example of politicisation of the ancient myth applied in a peculiar context – Portugal under Salazar's dictatorship. Creon is presented as an out-and-out tyrant and Antigone as a heroine, fighting for freedom and human rights.

The third part of this chapter focuses on the Second World War. In this period, *Antigone*'s reception was twofold: the play was appropriated both by members of the Resistance and by the Nazis to emphasise patriotic and heroic elements. Conservative viewers and authors could find acceptable ways of interpreting the ancient tragedy on the stage, opposing the model of Antigone as righteous rebel. Readings of the play either conformed to Nazi ideology and were deprived of any political reference, or attempted indirectly to criticise the regime. In particular, Anouilh's version (1944) represents a crucial moment in the reception history of *Antigone* and its establishment as political play. Anouilh's unsettling reading of the play, written and staged during the German occupation of France and then performed after the Liberation, produced controversial and indeed opposite interpretations. Anouilh's more sympathetic treatment of Creon was interpreted by collaborationists as praise of the Vichy government's efforts to maintain state security. Antigone was criticised by members of the Resistance because of her representation as an immature, illogical, and irritating character, ultimately self-defeating and unable of providing a meaning to her own death. In order to avoid reprisal in the context of 1944 occupied France, the author intentionally emphasised the ambiguities of the Sophoclean original and avoided a

clear-cut distinction between innocents (Antigone) and villains (Creon). The self-refuting, open texture of Anouilh's play, the self-conscious playing with reality, and the desacralisation of the tragedy contributed to shift the focus on to the intimate and personal, rather than the political, conflicts of the original.

In the aftermath of Nazism, *Antigone* was appropriated by Brecht (1948). His *Antigone* begins with a prologue set in Berlin in 1945, as two sisters discover that their deserter-brother has been hanged: the reference to Hitler's Germany is made explicit from the beginning. Brecht invited his audience to question the heroine's role: Antigone is presented as an upper-class woman who fights against the tyrannical Creon only when her own interests are violated. Creon is a corrupt, imperialistic tyrant, leading an aggressive war against Argos to control its mines. The emphasis on violence and destructions provoked by war demonstrates Brecht's self-conscious attempt to reflect upon the disaster of the recent war and to explore issues of responsibility – collaboration and resistance – during the years of the Second World War.

The influence of Anouilh and Brecht extended beyond their immediate impact. Their versions showed the way for later adaptations that reflected on political issues of dissent and resistance. Both authors belonged to a generation that experienced the damages of war, seen from a French and German perspective. They redefined the central relation between Antigone and Creon, thus establishing Antigone's career as an icon of resistance and dissent.

After my discussion of Brecht's adaptation, I focus on two other post-war interpretations of the *Antigone* offered by Carl Orff (1949) and Rolf Hochhuth (1963). These authors showed different attitudes to the Nazi regime, which emerge in their politicised (or un-politicised) approaches to the play. In his *Antigone*, Orff revived Hölderlin's translation, accentuating its oriental and ritualistic feature rather than its political aspects. His apolitical opera responded to the aesthetic dictates of the Nazi regime, which was willing to support Orff's work and offered funding for the production.[16] Hochhuth's novella *Die Berliner Antigone* is a tribute to the anonymous "Antigones" that died under the despotic Nazi regime. The rhetoric of protest of the

[16] See Attfield (2010), 345.

Sophoclean play is evoked in his adaptation, which reflects the tragic climate of life in Berlin during the Second World War.

With the exception of Sérgio's Portuguese *Antigone*, the adaptations analysed in my survey are predominantly French and German. The fascinating history of the play's politicisation is indeed a German and francophone story, rather than a British one. This is perhaps due to the broader role played by Classics in France and Germany in this period, as well as the development of particular cultural, philosophical, and political trends in these countries. The very considerable contributions of Hölderlin's translations in the field of philology and Hegel's in the field of philosophy were also determining in shaping some of the most significant political *Antigones* in the twentieth century.

Ireland is the only exception to the rule. Indeed it is the impact of the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone* that played a central role in determining a tradition of political Irish *Antigones*. This tradition, began from the mid nineteenth-century, became established from the 1980s onwards with the *Antigones* by Tom Paulin (1984), Brendan Kennelly (1996), and Seamus Heaney (2004) – amongst others.[17]

The influence of French (especially Anouilh) and German (Brecht) political *Antigones* has not ceased in the last century. In the final section of my thesis, I discuss the influence of Brecht's adaptation, which manifests itself in the Living Theatre's adaptation (1967), written in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, and in the movie *Deutschland im Herbst* (1987). I also explore the influence of *Antigone* in Africa and in South America, in order to show the political relevance of Sophocles' *Antigone* in non-Western contexts. Moreover, I summarise the main philosophical and feminist interpretative trends which have shaped *Antigone*'s modern reception. Recent feminist readings questioned the Eurocentric and patriarchal origin of Hegel's iconic interpretation of the play, challenging Antigone's status as feminist icon and advancing new politicised ways of interpreting the ancient tragedy.

What do the crucial divergences from the original add to our understanding of Sophocles' *Antigone*? In my dissertation, I analyse the peculiar approaches and techniques adopted by the authors in domesticating and modernising the play's

[17] See Macintosh (2011).

conflicts, the linguistic changes which occurred, and the influence of the very specific framework in which they operated. I explore, too, from a philological perspective the essential role of the translation adopted, by focusing on particular terms in the ancient Greek play, as well as key speeches. By investigating the important role of these versions in the process of politicisation of the play, my aim is to shed light on both the modern reception (what are the reasons for the prolonged and everlasting success of Antigone's myth in the modern time?) and the comprehension of classical drama (what are the underlying conflicts and uncertainties in human behaviour that *Antigone* explores?).

1.3 Reception Theory

As Steiner has argued, every author or artist who wishes to engage with Sophocles' play inevitably has to account for "judgments and uses of *Antigone,* from Aristotle to Lacan".[18] The Antigone story itself was not a Sophoclean invention. It belonged to the Theban saga, a well-known cycle of myths which narrated the Theban expeditions and the story of Oedipus (object of the lost *Thebais*, *Oedipodeia*, and *Epigonoi*).[19] There were no certain and definitive versions of these myths, which were older than the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[20] Ismene, Creon, and Haemon already appeared in the Theban saga, although they were given different roles in a number of different versions.[21] The character of Antigone and her presence in the saga is only attested in the fifth century BC, when she is first mentioned by the contemporary mythographer Pherecydes.[22]

Although his *Antigone* alludes to certain episodes of the Theban saga,[23] Sophocles inserted distinctive variants on the previous mythological background and

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[18] Steiner (1984), 296.
[19] A concise but detailed account of *Antigone*'s mythological background is offered by Cairns (2016), 1-10. On the different variants of the Antigone myth see Petersmann (1978); Zimmermann (1993); Mastronarde (1994), 17-30; Griffith (1999), 4-8. On the lost epic versions of the Theban saga, the *Thebais*, *Oedipodeia*, and *Epigonoi*, see West (2003), 5-10; 38-59.
[20] References to Oedipus' myth can be found in *Odyssey* 11.274-79. References to the Theban expeditions (the first, unsuccessful, led by the Seven, and the second, successful, led by their sons, the Epigoni) can be found in *Iliad* 4.372-99; 405-10, as well as in fragments by Hesiod and Stesichorus.
[21] On their different roles in previous versions, see Cingano (2003).
[22] See discussion of this fragment (fr. 95) in Fowler's commentary, Fowler (2013), 403-8; see also Zimmermann (1993), 89-96.
[23] The play often alludes to the troubled history of Antigone's family; it mentions Laius, Oedipus' father, and Labdacus, Laius' father (593, 862), and Megareus, Creon's son, who had appeared in Aeschylus' *Seven* (1303-5; 1312-13). The opening scene as well as the entrance song offer details of the mythical

gave Antigone a central role.[24] His *Antigone* occasionally activated the audience's knowledge of the play's mythical background without undermining the overall understanding of the play, in case such knowledge was lacking. The audience was nonetheless presumably acquainted with the background and main characters of the story because of their roles previously established in the saga, as can be deduced from the resonances of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* in the *parodos* of Sophocles' *Antigone*.[25] The appearance of Antigone at the end of Aeschylus' *Seven*, if considered spurious, can be interpreted as a response to expectations shaped by Sophocles' play and hence represents a particularly striking instance of early reception.

Antigone's reception therefore begins at the very moment of its origin, when Sophocles first introduced distinctive changes and innovations to the pre-existing myth of the Theban saga. The reception history of *Antigone* continues in antiquity:[26] characters and elements of the play appear in Sophocles' own *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*. Euripides wrote a lost *Antigone*,[27] and the heroine features in two scenes of his *Phoenician Women*.[28] The play's reception also extends to Rome, where *Antigone* was adapted by Accius and influenced Seneca's version of the *Phoenician Women* as well as Statius' *Thebaid*, which narrates the disintegration of Labdacus' house from Oedipus until Polynices' burial.[29] These later reworkings were particularly

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story but also show that a certain knowledge of the myth was taken for granted. See Cairns (2016), 6-7, who argues that, despite these explicit references and allusions, Sophocles' *Antigone* did not necessarily presuppose previous knowledge of the Theban cycle.

[24] Although it is possible to assume that Antigone appeared in the *Oedipodeia*, there is no certain attestation nor information about the role she might have played in the saga. Griffith (1999), 8-10, offers a detailed discussion of Sophocles' innovations.

[25] The *parodos* of Sophocles' *Antigone* narrates the attack of seven Argive captains against Thebes (141-42) and the retreat of the Argive army, struck by Zeus' thunderbolt (127-37). In the final scene of Aeschylus' *Seven*, Antigone and Ismene mourn their brothers and refuse the edict according to which Polynices should be denied burial. It seems probable that this version of the final sequence had been altered in response to Sophocles' influential play. On the inauthenticity of this ending, see Griffith (1999), 6-7; Hall (2011), 59. For further bibliography, see Taplin (1977), 169-91; Zimmermann (1993), 81-7; Sommerstein (2010), 90-3.

[26] For an overview of the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in antiquity, see Zimmermann (1993); Hall (2011); Wright (2012).

[27] In this version, Haemon was given a greater role. The play is summarised by Aristophanes of Byzantium in the 'arguments' (*hypotheseis*) that accompany Sophocles' version in mediaeval manuscripts. See Collard and Cropp (2008), 161.

[28] For more detail, see Mastronarde (1994), 17-30; Torrance (2010), 242-43.

[29] A detailed overview of Statius' *Thebaid* is provided by Zimmermann (1993), 252-63. The recent *Brill's Companion to Statius* (2015) offers insights on Statius' epic. See in particular Marinis (2015) and Criado (2015). On the question of Statius' models and the influence of the original itself, see Heslin (2008).

influential in the dissemination of the Antigone theme up until the late eighteenth century.[30] The specific Sophoclean "variant" became prominent and began to be transformed into an icon of resistance against tyranny with Hölderlin and Hegel, who helped establish the political tradition of the play. Such tradition also plays an important role in influencing later twentieth-century readings and interpretations of the *Antigone* story.

Therefore, shortly after its creation, *Antigone* was appropriated by different "readers" and transformed in very different ways to suit different contexts, quickly becoming a model of self-sacrifice, resilience to tyranny, and rebellion. Do these alterations add another, hidden meaning to the preceding Sophoclean "version" of the myth? Or do they simply transform it into a completely new and different story? What kind of message does the *Antigone* of Sophocles convey to audiences in the context of the South African apartheid regime, Polish martial law, or civil rights marches in Northern Ireland? These intriguing questions are particularly relevant for the purpose of the present study, which supports the idea that a text is the product of a dialogue between the producer and the receiver, intended as "historical" subject living in a certain "present" and influenced by previous layered readings of the same text. It is this dialogue, continuously shaping the ongoing meaning of the text itself, that has allowed for the creation of potentially innumerable versions of the *Antigone* story, which have proliferated all around the world from antiquity to the modern day.

The idea of a "theory" behind the "reception" of a text was inaugurated in the late 1960s by Hans Robert Jauss, Wolfgang Iser, and Hans-Georg Gadamer, key figures of the Constance School.[31] The aesthetic model offered by those scholars privileged the role of the reader, no longer viewed as passive but rather active receiver of a work of art: as a reader's response and active appropriation is always different, so are the received texts.[32] As a consequence, reception theory maintains that the meaning

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[30] See Steiner (1984), 139. See section 2.1. of this thesis.

[31] Jauss is author of *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft* (1967), presented as inaugural lecture at the University of Constance and translated into English in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (1982). In this work, Jauss outlines seven theses which delineate a methodological framework for reception theory. One of the pioneers in the field of classical reception studies is also Steiner with his seminal book *Antigones* published in 1984, particularly useful for this survey.

[32] A reader engages in what Iser calls the "reading process" (*Lesevorgang*); see also Hexter (2006), 24; Martindale (2006), 3, argues that "a 'text' is never just 'itself' … rather it is something that a reader reads, differently".

of a text is contingent upon the way it has been read by different interpreters, historically. A reader's response is arguably not arbitrary but rather determined by the "horizon of expectations" (*Erwartungshorizont*) of a certain reader/spectator (the background, gender, political experience, and beliefs), which is an integral part of the "reception process" that leads to the creation of a new *Antigone* and to a certain interpretative experience.[33]

My thesis, which considers how the *Antigone* has been reconfigured and reinterpreted by later authors in different contexts, supports the idea that *Antigone* is inevitably set in both philosophical and political traditions and cannot be experienced completely "unmediated".[34] In particular, I am interested in investigating the powerful chain of *Antigone*'s reception and political tradition inaugurated by Hegel, which I believe has helped to shape the politicised icon of *Antigone* as story of rebellion and resistance that survives to this day. The "historicity" of a classical work, grounded in a certain historical context, and the influence of the chain of reception of its previous intervening readers, are emphasised by Charles Martindale in his work *Redeeming the Text. Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (1993). Martindale concludes that "our current interpretations of ancient texts, whether or not we are aware of it, are, in complex ways, constructed by the chain of receptions through which their continued readability has been effected … we cannot get back to any originary meaning wholly free of subsequent accretions." [35] Against positivist and historicist accounts, Martindale argues that Classics are to be interpreted as something changeable, activated and influenced by the readers' perspectives and no longer unequivocal, fixed, and unchanging through time. Therefore, the meaning of a text cannot be determined

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[33] The same "reception theory" can be consistently applied to the fifth-century Athenian audience, whose expectations (certainly different from that of modern audiences) were shaped by the ideologies and values of contemporary society. On the social context of tragic festivals and the ideological and civic function of tragedy see, most notably, Goldhill (1990), 97-129; Winkler and Zeitlin (1990); Holt (1999), 670-90, on the ways in which the play interacts with the audiences' expectations and established values of civic life; Hardwick (2013) on communities of reception and performance, ancient and modern spectators. On the social composition of fifth-century Athenian audience, see Griffin (1998); Seaford (2000); Sommerstein (2010).

[34] In his Norton Lectures (1927), titled "The Classical Tradition in Poetry", T. S. Eliot first employed the term "classical tradition". Butler (2016), 8, remarks that recent scholarship on reception studies has intended this tradition to be synonymous with "customary, established, and authoritative" rather than with the Latin *traditio* or "handing over" of knowledge. On the different connotations of the term "tradition" and its relationship with "reception", see Budelmann and Haubold (2008).

[35] Martindale (1993), 7.

solely by the "intention-bearing authorial voice",[36] but rather it is mediated by specific readers' responses, situated in a certain context.

Martindale's assumption that the meaning of a text "is always constructed at the point of reception" is not particularly original.[37] His "readerly" model, which privileges the "reader" (who can then become "author" of an adapted text) at the centre of reception, undermines the importance of the audience. Not only the act of "reading" but also the act of "viewing" has an important interpretative role. "Performance reception", a more recent subfield of classical reception, can be situated "at the intersection between classics and theatre studies" and attempts to understand spectator responses.[38] In a theatre, the audience is gathered together and, in front of a particularly powerful representation, will "receive" the text collectively and construe a consciousness that extends to the broader political tensions of the community itself.

That *Antigone* acquires a new significance for a certain audience in a certain context is evident in the case of Anouilh's version, performed in front of a mixed audience including French and Germans, pro-Resistance fighters and Nazis' supporters.[39] Because of the crucial historical moment in which it was performed and because the author allowed multiple voices to be validated as much as undermined, his *Antigone* was interpreted in opposite ways by different contemporary readers and in different contexts, before and after the Liberation of France. The case of Anouilh's *Antigone* proves that there is no single way of reading a text and there are instead different possible interpretations or ways of deliberately changing the story, informed by different perspectives, contexts, and agendas.

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[36] As Hirsch (1967) maintained. For a critique of this model see Knapp and Michaels (1982) which, although dated, offers a provocative and thoughtful counter-argument.

[37] Martindale (2006), 3-4. As Batstone (2006), 14, puts it: "After all, what meaning is there that is not already a received meaning?" Our choices and ways of reading a text are inevitably informed by earlier readings and traditions of reception.

[38] Michelakis (2008), 219. On performance reception, see Schoenmakers (1992); Bennett (1997); Hall (2004); Michelakis (2006); Macintosh (2008). On "performance culture" and Athenian democracy, see also Goldhill's thought-provoking introduction in Goldhill and Osborne (1999), which explores Athenian "performance culture", manifested in different sites and institutions of the democratic *polis*. The continuously updated databases of the APGRD, Oxford (www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/), The Open University Reception of Classical Texts Research project, (www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/index.html) and the European Network of Performance of Ancient Drama (www.cc.uoa.gr/drama/network/index.html) represent fundamental tools for theatre and performance studies.

[39] See section 3.3.2. of this thesis.

Each of the twentieth-century versions analysed in the present study have performance histories of their own. However, I am primarily interested in an analysis of the political aspects of these versions, taking the text and translation adopted as main reference point (rather than their performance history). My political and textual approach allows me to analyse how the "original" Sophoclean variant of the Antigone myth has been reconfigured and reinterpreted by later authors in different contexts. By focusing on iconic lines which have been preserved in modern adaptations and by highlighting the divergences from the original, I emphasise the role of the text in shaping the modern understanding of the original. My study supports the idea that the reception of a text is an ongoing and dynamic process, construed through a complex dialogue begun in the past, "for not only do we not "know" the past, we also do not "know" what we are doing with it in the present", as Tim Whitmarsh has suggested.[40] There is a dialogic communication in which the author is as important an agent as the reader is: the ultimate "significance" of a text is constructed through a dialogic "conversation" between the two.

The idea of a constant dialogue between the author and the receiver was emphasised by Mikhail Bakhtin , who maintained that "the event of the life of the text, that is its true essence, always develops on the *boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects*": [41] the author and the reader, antiquity and modernity. Whereas Bakhtin emphasised the universality of any communicative procedure, Lorna Hardwick has brought attention to the historicity of such a relationship, highlighting "the two-way relationship between the source text or culture and the new work and receiving culture".[42] Such a reciprocity, Hardwick concludes, leads to an interesting interaction with the original text, and helps to frame questions relevant to the contemporary culture that reads it – questions that, without modern reception, might have been marginalised or neglected. For example, in his reinterpretation of the play, Brecht emphasised the motif of violence and outlined a new dilemma concerning the appropriateness of an Antigone-like act in the context of 1945 Berlin. Such a dilemma no longer concerns the opposition between the laws of the gods and the laws of the

[40] Whitmarsh (2006), 107.
[41] Bakhtin (1986), 106 (emphasis in original).
[42] Hardwick (2003), 4.

state, but rather emphasises issues of morality, personal agency, and responsibility behind political actions. These issues are not absent in the original but are highlighted by Brecht because they are directly relevant to post-war Germany and to the author's own interpretation.

That new meanings and questions are framed within different socio-political contexts is most evident if we consider non-European versions of *Antigone*. In Africa and South America, the engagement with the play has enabled authors to challenge or, to use Hardwick's formulation, "decolonise" its canonical status.[43] This tendency also contributes to the development of political drama, questioning the role of a Western classical heritage in African and American literature and culture.

"Classical reception", "performance history", "appropriation", and other related concepts are especially important for the present work, which is concerned with the study of the major twentieth-century adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone*, and help to offer an explanation to the enduring power of the play in the modern world. Overall, the case studies of *Antigone*'s reception presented in my research show that many of the changes made to the source text are located in the particular socio-political context of the receiving culture that produced the reworking of the story. Each author, in approaching *Antigone*, operates within his own context and, by impressing upon the original his own agenda, engages at the same time with the classical past and with the present. A close examination of this dialogue with the past can help shed light on both the ancient source text and the modern world that receives it.

1.4. The *Antigone* of Sophocles

In order to understand the degree of variety in modern responses to the ancient model, it is necessary to analyse the *Antigone* of Sophocles in its original context, evaluating the ambiguities, issues, and key themes that proved particularly influential in later contexts. In what follows, I explore the political elements and the theme of human versus divine order which permeate the play, as well as the notion of Antigone's death and the Sophoclean Chorus – all key topics to which the modern versions discussed

[43] See Hardwick (2004).

below responded in unique and interesting ways. In particular, the political relevance of *Antigone* as well as its continuous ambiguities and moral complexities have inspired a variety of interpretations in later periods, in which the play has been used to address gender issues and political concerns.

The political orientation taken by Sophocles' *Antigone* is not all retrospective. Of all ancient Greek tragedies, *Antigone* was considered as "one of the most political" by the ancient Greeks.[44] The Sophoclean play dramatises contemporary political issues, such as the regulation of burial of traitors and marriage law, the proper place of women and the attempts to control women's behaviour at funerals.[45] However, *Antigone* is set within the distant past of heroic Thebes rather than in contemporary Athenian society.[46] Some critics emphasised tragedy's ability to reassure the Athenian audience and reinforce the community's value system by contrast and comparison with negative *exempla* set in Thebes, in a distant mythical past.[47] The "diachronic stretch" between the mythical heroic world portrayed in the play and the audience allowed authors to discuss contemporary political issues and to present multiple conflicting perspectives.[48] The intrinsic polyphony of Greek drama and the presence of different competing voices enabled poets to appeal to and engage with the diverse fifth-century Athenian audience.[49]

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[44] Nelli (2010), 353. A number of contemporary scholars have suggested that ancient Greek tragedy as a genre is intrinsically political. See Zeitlin (1990); Sourvinou-Inwood (2003); Csapo (2007); Goldhill (2007), 3; Wilson (2009); Hall (2010). For criticism, see Allan and Kelly (2013). By "political", I mean relevant to and shared in the institution of the *polis* and "concerned with human beings in a *polis*"; Macleod (1982), 132, here in reference to the *Eumenides*. A diverging approach focuses primarily on the aesthetic and universal qualities of tragedy; see Heath (1987); Garvie (2009), xvi-xxii. These responses are of course legitimate but do not consider the distinctively political character of tragedy.

[45] Consider, for example, Solonian funerary legislation, which attempted to limit public and excessive expressions of mourning, used to show solidarity amongst powerful families; see, most notably, Seaford (1994), 74-92; Alexiou (2002), 14-8; Osborne (2012), 276-78, for an analysis of contemporary political debates dramatised in *Antigone*.

[46] This is often the case in Greek drama. Zeitlin (1990) has influentially argued that the "aristocratic model" of archaic mythical Thebes worked as "anti-Athens", a negative model to "democratic" Athens. In connection to this, Goff (1995) argued that the interference of Theban women in public life is a distinct characteristic of Greek tragedy. Hall (1997), 101, has also convincingly argued that Thebes was notably presented as a negative model, "whose negative characteristics are partly determined by their deviation from the Athenians' own positive self-representations".

[47] See Seaford (2000), 42-3.

[48] Allan and Kelly (2013), 78. See also Seaford (2000), 42: "the disastrous doings of ruling families in tragedy are removed from the Athenian audience not only in time (in the age of myth) but also spatially (notably in Thebes)".

[49] On the polysemic and multivocal nature of tragedy see Foley (1995); Hall (1997); Allan and Kelly (2013).

Sophocles' *Antigone*, too, offers deliberately ambiguous views, avoiding partisan or clear-cut interpretations. It does not offer a general and abstract moral nor does it impart a definitive lesson but rather emphasises the clash between different competing voices.[50] Such polyphony and inherent ambiguity were particularly suitable to modern authors, for example Anouilh, who exploited the play's open texture, and Honegger, who offered a deliberately ambiguous reading of the Antigone-Creon conflict. In contrast to these ambiguous treatments, other modern authors and commentators assumed that Creon was unmistakably the tyrant.[51] Both Hasenclever's and Sérgio's *Antigones* presented a clear-cut interpretation of the tragic conflict and transformed the original into a political drama of resistance against autocratic oppression, by reconceiving Creon as an authoritarian king and Antigone as the prototype of a female freedom fighter. In turn, Anouilh and Brecht complicated the Antigone-Creon conflict and emphasised the ambiguities of their positions.

Precisely the ambiguity and political elements inherent to the original as well as its openness to different interpretations have favoured the play's ongoing endurance and success, inspiring the iconic versions and appropriations that have created the political tradition of the play in the twentieth century. Because Sophocles' *Antigone* transcends the boundaries of the strictly "local" and "parochial" and explores general human concerns, models of behaviour, and issues relating to government common to most societies and universally dramatisable, it soon gave way to the creation of many political interpretations equally relevant in different contexts.[52]

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[50] This is not to say that Greek tragedy did not have any educative effect or was not expected to teach a moral lesson. *Antigone*'s discussion of the dangers and nature of political authority is certainly concerned with current political issues. And yet, the final, unsettling questions posed by the play remain open and unfixed: "the vagueness of the tragic world … enabled difficult questions to be asked without divisiveness or uniformity of interpretation"; see Croally (2005), 68. As Goldhill (1986), 286, puts it: "It is because tragedy is not reducible to a simple 'message', because these dramas are not played out or exhausted in a single reading or performance, that readers return again and again to ancient tragedy."

[51] See Miola (2014), 222-23.

[52] See Hall (2011), 62. Hall demonstrates that, although *Antigone* reflected Athens' view against Thebes, its issues soon appealed to different *poleis* and constitutions. As Goldhill (2012), 37, correctly remarks, tragedy's politics is to be found "in the searing exploration of the basic elements of democratic principle: responsibility, duty, masculinity, decision-making, self-control and so on" rather than in the specific institutions of fifth-century Athenian society.

1.4.1. Sophocles' *Antigone*: A Drama of Political Rebellion Against Tyranny?

The *Antigone* of Sophocles voices the viewpoint of a woman and discusses the concerns of the community, the legislation of the *polis*, as well as the dangers posed to the city by civil disobedience and by a despotic rule which disregards the interests of its citizens.[53] However, Sophocles' *Antigone* does not offer a clear political and subversive agenda from the outset.[54] By ancient standards, Creon was not associated immediately with a tyrant and Antigone's rebellion was not perceived as a political act of resistance against the arbitrary despotism of a male-ruled state.

In the original, Antigone has a central role and is not simply the supporter of a male protagonist. She is an unmarried woman who, by arguing publicly against the king and by performing the burial outside of the domestic sphere (*oikos*), abandons the traditional feminine prerogatives expected of women in Greek society. Her defiant claim represents an exceptional display of independence and political agency and does not conform to traditional feminine behaviour and subservience. She is a woman "out of her proper place",[55] who acts outside of the *oikos*, and threatens the stability of the *polis* by placing the private interests of the individual before the public interests of the *polis* – to be identified, in the fictionalised setting of the play, with Thebes. Although attention to funeral rites was seen as a feminine prerogative, Greek women traditionally performed the first part of the funerary ritual, whereas the actual burial ceremony was carried out by men.[56]

However, if considered in the context of ancient Greek tragedy, Antigone's resistance is not surprising.[57] Female "rebels" abound in the theatre of Dionysus,

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[53] According to Hall (1997), tragedy's inclusion of viewpoints of groups (such as non-Athenian, women and slaves) normally excluded from the public sphere simultaneously promoted and challenged the civic identity and dominant values of the *polis*.

[54] Some scholars see tragedy as a highly subversive and transgressive art form, deliberately calling into question contemporary social institutions and traditional norms of the *polis* (although in the vagueness of a distant, heroic past). See especially Sourvinou-Inwood (1989) for *Antigone*; Goldhill (2000) for Greek tragedy more in general; Rehm (2003), ch. 4. For criticism, see Griffith (1995); Griffin (1998); Carter (2011); Allan and Kelly (2013).

[55] Sourvinou-Inwood (1989), 140. Her position is challenged by Foley (1995).

[56] See Sourvinou-Inwood (1989), 140, who challenges the assumption that burial was a female duty. Griffith (2001), 132, argues that Antigone's act of burial is "both supremely feminine … and also shockingly masculine." The burial of Polynices, too, is eventually undertaken by Creon (1196-203).

[57] Although women were traditionally excluded from the realm of politics, the representation of "rebellious" women on the stage simultaneously "reminds the audience of what is expected of Attic women in everyday life"; Foley (2001), 114. Foley (2001), 174, also argues that Antigone does indeed

which deliberately represented extreme circumstances and created self-willed, "bad", and indeed exceptional women on the stage. In the fictionalised setting and multivocal form of Greek tragedy, rebellious and unconventional forms of behaviour were permitted in a way normally inconceivable in the reality of life in Athens. Antigone herself is "distanced" as a heroic Theban princess. Although transgressive and unconventional, her behaviour inevitably encourages admiration: her destiny is compared to mythical brides and mothers whose heroic actions are mentioned by the Chorus (944-87).[58] Against traditional expectations, the heroine is determined to express "her own" independently, without boundaries and limits (ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲν αὐτῷ τῶν ἐμῶν <μ᾽> εἴργειν μέτα, 48), even if this entails resisting a male authority and betraying her household obligations.[59] In Creon's words, Antigone is uncontrolled, "unleashed" (578-79).[60] The king's sense of honour is directly linked to the fear of being considered inferior to a female and the desire to appear manly (as he points out more than once, lines 525; 678-80; 740; 756). This theme, thoroughly Sophoclean, has additional resonance in modern versions, which emphasise the fear of Creon's feminisation (Fugard) or transform Antigone into the prototype of feminist resistance (Kennelly).

Because Antigone's dire action and outspoken defiance represent a deviation from the norm and a threat of disorder, Creon is initially entitled to punish her and restore the traditional gender hierarchy. He is not only the highest political authority of the *polis*, he is also the heroine's closest male relative (*kyrios*). Therefore, his actions are, to a certain extent, legitimate and appropriate.[61] The positive representation of Creon is reinforced by the orthodox and uncontroversial principles laid down in his opening speech (lines 162-210), pointing to patriotic and civic duty, the well-being of the *polis* and the necessity to punish traitors. Part of this speech (lines 175-90) is cited by Demosthenes in his *On the False Embassy* speech against Aeschines (19.247) as an

act in exceptional circumstances in which women, in the absence of a male relative, "could be expected to act autonomously".

[58] The Chorus' attitude towards the heroine is indeed ambiguous: they admire the heroine to a certain extent, but they also emphasise her responsibility in the tragedy (853-56).

[59] Women were expected to marry and produce an heir: Antigone renounces these priorities in favour of another obligation towards her family and the gods.

[60] Also the Chorus claim that she is αὐτόνομος (821), "self-ruling". The frequency and use of "*auto*-terms" in the play was first emphasised by Loraux (1986); see also Stocking (2014), 73-6.

[61] Although Creon's decision to condemn her to death without a trial contradicts Athenian law; see Harris (2006), 76. In the next paragraph, I shall analyse in greater detail the controversial implications and legislative value of Creon's edict.

exemplary model for those who try to achieve power in the *polis*.[62] This speech also retains Periclean overtones – especially in reference to Pericles' notorious funeral oration (Thuc. 2.60), in which the Athenian stateman emphasised the necessity of putting the well-being of the *polis* before the interests of the private citizens.[63] Therefore, most scholars agree that Creon's speech sounded "most acceptable to a fifth-century Athenian audience".[64]

However, the fact that the principles expressed by Creon are uncontroversial and accepted does not necessarily imply that he was seen in a positive and sympathetic light by the audience.[65] Frequent references to Creon's own *persona* placed in emphatic position (lines 164; 173; 178; 184; 188; 191; 207; 210) anticipate hints of Creon's tyrannical attitude. Already in this speech Creon identifies monarchy with absolute power (ἐγὼ κράτη δὴ πάντα καὶ θρόνους ἔχω. 173) and asserts that a man can only be tested through "government and the laws" (ἀρχαῖς τε καὶ νόμοισιν, 177). Later in the play, Creon's authoritarian behaviour is radicalised and suggests that his government is in fact turning into despotism. In front of Haemon, Creon argues that the state is an extension of the ruler and belongs to him (738), and the king must be always obeyed "in small, just and unjust matters" (ἀλλ᾽ ὃν πόλις στήσειε, τοῦδε χρὴ κλύειν / καὶ σμικρὰ καὶ δίκαια καὶ τἀναντία, 666-67). Ismene, Tiresias and the Messenger (lines 60; 1056; 1169) describe Creon as a tyrant and Antigone denounces openly the absolute power of tyranny (ἀλλ᾽ ἡ τυραννὶς … αὐτῇ δρᾶν λέγειν θ᾽ ἃ βούλεται, 506-7).[66]

Therefore, Creon is both a patriot, a leader who wants to protect his *polis*, but also a self-willed tyrant who is determined to secure "his own power, which he feels to be controversial" because it is inherited after the death of both legitimate successors,

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[62] However, in quoting this speech, Demosthenes also denigrates Aeschines' role as "third rate actor" playing the role of a "tyrant" (19.247), in reference to Creon. See Cairns (2016), 165-66. Both Demosthenes (also in his *On the Crown*, 18.120) and Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1373b 12-3; 1375b 1-2; 1415b 20; 1417a 32-3; 1418b 32; *Poetics* 1454a 1) refer to *Antigone* with regard to the art of oratory.

[63] On Thucydides' funeral speech and its relation to Creon's opening speech, see Woodard (1966), 83; Bowra (1994), 68-9; Harris (2006), 41.

[64] Winnington-Ingram (2009), 123. See also Bowra (1994), 68; Knox (1964), 181; Sourvinou-Inwood (1989), 135; Foley (1995), 144; Griffith (1999), 155-56; Carter (2007), 107, argues that, to a fifth-century audience, "much of Creon's speech … would have made perfect sense". For criticism, see Harris (2006), 77, who doubts that Creon's speeches "would have found a receptive audience in Athens".

[65] See Cairns (2016), 165-66.

[66] Harris (2006), 70.

Eteocles and Polynices.[67] The complex nuances of Creon's characterisation in the original favoured a multiplicity of interpretations in later receptions. In contrast to most modern adaptations, Anouilh's version played on the ambiguities of the original and emphasised the human aspect of Creon already present in the text by giving a more sympathetic image of the ruler – which allowed him to avoid censorship at a crucial historical moment, during the Nazi occupation of France. Other twentieth-century authors, such as Hasenclever, Sérgio, and Brecht, accentuated the negative and authoritarian side of the king, his coercion of Antigone's resistance to his absolutist ambitions. Thus, they tended to emphasise the legitimacy of Antigone's open act of defiance and fearless protest against Creon's tyranny.

In Sophocles, although it is perceived as exceptional and transgressive, Antigone's "crime" does not indeed represent an open act of political resistance. Rather, Antigone's heroic act goes beyond the immediate purpose of defying authority and is not motivated by the desire to subvert the norm of the *polis*. Antigone points out the despotism of Creon's government but her opposition to tyranny is only a consequence of her act, not the cause. She performs the burial out of *philia* to her brother, whom she considers irreplaceable,[68] and out of respect for the unwritten laws of the gods (450-58). Moreover, Sophocles' heroine admits that she would have not done the same for a husband or children (μητρὸς δ' ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιν / οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἂν βλάστοι ποτέ, 911-12), thus questioning the ethical and political reasons behind her act.[69] Her rebellion is determined by a very specific circumstance and it is directed to a particular injustice and decree decided "undemocratically" by one man alone. And yet, family and the state are closely connected and presuppose each other. In defending the "family" and challenging Creon's edict, laid down for the whole *polis* (πανδήμῳ πόλει, 7), Antigone inevitably enters the realm of politics and speaks of justice and the laws (451-52; 455; 459).[70] The

[67] Silva (2017a), 393.
[68] On the irreplaceability of the brother, see Chanter (1995), 97-108.
[69] Aristotle referred to these lines in his *Rhetoric* with regard to the art of oratory (*Rhet*. 1417a 32-3): if something seems "not credible", then "the reason must be added", as Antigone does in Sophocles' tragedy. Thus, he regarded the passage as authentic. Goethe wished that he could prove these lines spurious. See further discussion in Brown (1987); Foley (2001), 176-84.
[70] According to the Hegelian view of the play, state and family are implicated in each other. Antigone's act cannot be set apart from political considerations and consequences. On Butler's contrasting argument, see section 3.5.4. of this thesis.

contraposition of genders and collision of different viewpoints raise political questions of civic and moral responsibility, individual and familial obligations.

Therefore, the *Antigone* of Sophocles is not originally a play of rebellion and resistance to tyranny. The ancient tragedy highlights the "irreconcilability of the multiplicity of perspectives clashing in the play",[71] rather than the political opposition of the individual against an autocratic government. Creon seeks, after all, to protect the *polis*, and Antigone's opposition stems from an inner impetus to fulfil an external obligation, the desire to honour the gods below and to be loyal to her brother, rather than from the desire to defy Creon openly and overthrow the laws of the *polis*. By representing the death of Antigone and the downfall of Creon, Sophocles' tragedy displays the fatal consequences of opposing the state and the gods and offers a conservative solution, "strangely seductive and comforting, even for a democratic audience".[72] Sophocles' *Antigone* shows reverence to the gods and their unknowable will and points to the limits of human knowledge and the instability of life rather than encouraging the defiance of established authority. By exploring general issues of political authority and divine justice, gender role and morality, the fragility of human law and existence, Sophocles' *Antigone* worked as a "salutary form of self-ruination" and self-criticism, and prompted critical discussion of established ideologies and principles.[73]

This discussion, in turn, opened up varied ways to interpret the play's conflicts in later centuries, in which *Antigone* has become a paradigmatic drama of protest and resistance. The ancient tragedy has been adapted to different, socio-political contexts in which human rights have been oppressed or violated. Sacrificing the idea of a balanced opposition between two equally valid principles, many modern receptions have transformed Antigone's deed into an act of political rebellion against tyranny.

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[71] Allan and Kelly (2013), 79.
[72] Griffith (1999), 58.
[73] See Stocking (2014), 71; in his essay, Stocking argues that tragedy, although critical and subversive, ultimately served as "auto immunizing" antidote for the well-being of the Greek *polis*.

1.4.2. Human Order and Divine Law

At the basis of Antigone's and Creon's collision stands a "legislative" problem: a different conception of the meaning of "law" (*nomos*).[74] For Creon, it is necessary to obey the laws issued by those in power (in this case, by him alone) and there is no need of divine approval.[75] According to Antigone, the laws of the *polis* derive their legitimacy from the unwritten laws of the gods (450-58). Antigone qualifies Creon's edict as simple order (*kêrugma*) issued by a magistrate (*strategos*, 8) rather than as legitimate law or *nomos* (21-36) and denies that she has broken any law (450-51).[76] In his *Rhetoric* (1373b 12-3; 1375b 1-2), Aristotle cited these lines and approved of Antigone's assertion of the superiority of the universal laws. A fifth-century audience, too, would have felt that Creon's order (*kêrugma*) lacks the validity of a law (*nomos*) because it applies to a specific individual and situation in time rather than being a general provision eternally valid.[77]

This motif is less prominent in modern versions, in which Creon condemns not only Polynices but anyone who opposes his rule. In both Brecht's and Hochhuth's adaptations, Polynices is one of the many victims punished by the regime. Also the motif of burial, which has a major role in the original, loses importance in some modern versions. In Anouilh, the practice of burial, sacred to the Greeks, is seen as a derisory pantomime, a tradition without significance, in which neither Creon nor Antigone believe. In other versions, Antigone attributes importance to the burial because of a personal, inexplicable feeling and brotherly instinct, not because of her belief in the superior laws of the gods (for example in Hasenclever and Hochhuth).

In Sophocles, Antigone's deed is justified by a higher law, the necessity of burying the dead, recognised by all the Greeks and sanctioned by divine powers. Although in fifth-century Athens it was common to deny burial to traitors and

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[74] See Harris (2006), 71.
[75] The notion that citizen must always obey the laws is expressed for example in Thuc. iii 37.3-4 and Demosth. xxi 34. However, according to the Ephebic Oath, young Athenian men swore to obey only the orders issued "prudently" and to disregard those, which were not.
[76] Creon uses both terms interchangeably (177; 191). See Fletcher (2010), 172; 179, and Harris (2006), 62-3; 68.
[77] Creon's order is a "law of particularity" which applies to a single individual, Polynices; by contrast, in order to be established, a law had to refer to a broader category of people or actions; see Harris (2006), 47-8.

transgressors and the *polis*' control over funerary practice was taken for granted, even traitors normally were granted burial outside of Attica in the belief that the dead belonged to the nether gods.[78] By leaving a corpse that belongs to the gods unburied (ἄμοιρον, ἀκτέριστον, ἀνόσιον νέκυν, 1071) in the upper world in his own *polis*, Creon transgresses the sacred duty of funerary rites. Therefore, Antigone has a legitimate ground in opposing the king's edict and the tragedy proves that Creon is wrong about the will of the gods and the concept of the law. Although he, too, invokes Zeus and is aware that his own power derives from Zeus (Ζεῦ, 604; Ζηνός, 487; 1040; θεοὺς μιαίνειν, 1044), he shows no regard for the gods (as Haemon remarks: οὐ γὰρ σέβεις, τιμάς γε τὰς θεῶν πατῶν, 745) and his "irreligious" attitude ultimately provokes the downfall of the *polis*.[79]

Creon is also wrong in neglecting family bonds and responsibilities, considered essential for good leadership in ancient Greece.[80] He himself claims that the welfare of the city and the household are connected (661-62), but he has no pity for Antigone, no matter if she is his sister's child (εἴτ᾽ ἀδελφῆς εἴθ᾽ ὁμαιμονεστέρα, 486). He does not hesitate to reject his own son, Haemon, for what he believes is the interest of the state and he is prepared to condemn Ismene too. Creon only privileges the *philoi* who are loyal to the *polis* and its priorities. For him, safeguarding the fatherland is more important than protecting family members (καὶ μείζον᾽ ὅστις ἀντὶ τῆς αὑτοῦ πάτρας / φίλον νομίζει, τοῦτον οὐδαμοῦ λέγω, 182-83).[81]

Only at the end, after the death of his son and wife, does Creon learn that the *philia* that connects blood-relatives is a duty as important as the political obligations felt towards the community. His downfall shows that the gods' authority transcends the authority of the king and the order granted by human laws is often precarious. Creon

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[78] On the issue of burial in the play, see Parker (1983), 45-8; Ostwald (1986), 151-61; Sourvinou-Inwood (1989), 137-38, 147; Harris (2006), 67; Liapis (2013), 89-90. In the Homeric poems, burial is considered an essential privilege and norm; see *Il.* 16.457, 675; 22.358; 23.9; 24.112-15, 134-36; and *Od*. 11.73; 24.190, 296.

[79] See Segal (1964), 50.

[80] See Thuc. ii 44.3-4; Dinarchus, *Against Demosthenes* 71.

[81] Typical of archaic and classical Greece is the idea that it is necessary to "help your friends (*philoi*) and harm your enemies (*echthroi*)": this mutual obligation, as the Antigone story proves, is indeed problematic in the tragedy. Antigone wishes that Creon, her enemy, suffers "as great evils as the one unjustly inflicted on her" (925-28), and treats her brother Polynices as *philos*. Yet, she considers her own sister Ismene as an enemy, *echthros*, because she chooses to respect Creon's law and is not willing to help her actively (543). See Blundell (1989).

only belatedly regrets his arrogant assumptions and admits that it is better to keep the "established laws" (significantly: καθεστῶτας νόμους) to life's very end (δέδοικα γὰρ μὴ τοὺς καθεστῶτας νόμους / ἄριστον ᾖ σῴζοντα τὸν βίον τελεῖν; 1113-14).[82] He who had everything has lost everything and becomes "nobody" (1325). Although he has erred and deserves punishment, Creon's downfall is no less tragic. He survives the catastrophe but he fully bears the consequences of his mistakes and learns his lesson in suffering.

And yet Antigone, too, dies lamenting her destiny and her isolation.[83] She does not have the support of her sister Ismene and the city. Haemon's claim that Thebes supports her is not substantiated (733),[84] and the Chorus do not intervene. In her last *kommos*, she confesses that she acted "against the citizens' will" (βίᾳ πολιτῶν, 907), using the same expression that Ismene employed in the first scene (79), although before she claimed that the Chorus supported her (504-5; 509). She wonders whether she has pleased the gods (τί χρή με τὴν δύστηνον ἐς θεοὺς ἔτι / βλέπειν; 922-23) and acknowledges that she is dying "for having shown reverence" to the gods (τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα. 943); however, she thinks that both the gods and the city have abandoned her. Precisely because she has lost faith in the support of the gods and the people, Antigone commits suicide and dies without knowing of Creon's repentance. In this scene, Antigone is "isolated … to an unusual degree".[85] It is remarkable that she sings her own *kommos*, whereas it was traditionally sung alternatively by two groups of antiphonal voices.[86] The Chorus do respond to Antigone's lament and show some pity. They admit that Antigone's deed displayed a certain reverence (Antigone's *eusebeia* is mentioned at lines 511; 872; 924; 943) and attempt to offer consolation. However, they also criticise the heroine's transgression and her self-willed disposition (αὐτόγνωτος … ὀργά, 875*;* she is "bold", θρασύς, 853).

The ambivalent comments of the judgemental Chorus raise the problem of the legitimacy of Antigone's act. The conflicting and shifting evaluations by the Chorus, as well as the open-ended issues of the play, do not provide a one-sided and univocal

[82] On this climatic moment of the play, in which Creon "wants to "undo" what he has done", and its tragic irony, see comments in Goldhill (2012), 21.
[83] On the politics of mourning in the play, see further Taxidou (2004); Honig (2013), 95-115.
[84] However, Creon does not negate it and it might well be true. See Cairns (2016), 49-50.
[85] Griffith (1999), 11.
[86] Goldhill (2012), 110.

view but rather invite the diversity of interpretations of later adaptations, influenced by different cultural contexts and traditions. In Sophocles, Antigone's unconventional entrance into the male world of public speaking and decision-making ultimately ends in disaster and in her own death. There is no mention of funeral rites for her and the focus shifts completely upon Creon, present on the stage without interruption from 387-1114.[87] The idea that she is a "living corpse" recurs in Antigone's words (810-13; 850-52); at the end, the same expression is used in reference to Creon (ἔμψυχον ἡγοῦμαι νεκρόν, 1167), thus reinforcing the parallel between their fates. As he finds out that Eurydice is dead, Creon himself claims that he is "a dead man" (1288). Although the issues raised by the tragedy introduce a plurality of perspective and voices rather than offering universal truths, the play's ending also has a didactic impact and allows one to draw a possible conclusion. The tragedy ends with the suffering of both Creon and Antigone, thus calling into question the precipitate decisions and actions of both. This is not to say that punishment and suffering are matched by negative characterisation; because Creon and Antigone suffer, it does not mean that they are both "bad". However, the tragedy calls attention to the similarity between their destinies and situations, which seems to suggest that an action can be partially wrong and right at the same time, under different circumstances and aspects. The mutual punishments which equalise Antigone, the defender of the divine law, and Creon, the promoter of the human law, demonstrate that human and divine orders are implicated in each other and should coexist in the ideal *polis*.

A number of modern versions read the play in terms of the individual's opposition to tyranny, highlighting the antithetical polarity between two irreconcilable positions: one that privileges the interests of the state (and of the ruler) and the other that prioritises the family and/or the individual. An exploration of the original has indeed revealed that issues related to the *oikos*/*genos* and the *polis* are closely interconnected and depend on each other. Both Creon and Antigone enter the "domain" of the other in a complex dialectic in which secular and divine law cannot be mutually exclusive.

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[87] There is a shift of focus from Antigone (she is referred to for the last time at 1240-41) to Creon and his fate. See Winnington-Ingram (2009), 118: "he [Creon] is visible to the audience for a longer continuous period and for a greater total length of time" than Antigone.

1.4.3. Antigone's Death: a *kerdos*?

A number of early modern receptions are inclined to interpret Antigone's sacrificial death as a model of piety and devotion to her family, exemplary of the heroine's uncompromising spirit, who refuses to yield and who defends her principles to the point of self-sacrifice and self-destruction for a higher cause.[88] By ancient standards, Antigone's suicide also represents a radical and transgressive act, albeit for different reasons: it prevents the heroine from marrying and giving an heir to her father's household and it entails the rejection of the last surviving members of her family – Ismene and Creon. In lamenting her imminent death, the heroine insists that she dies unwed and a virgin. The emphasis on Antigone's loss of marriage also pinpoints Creon's failure: as Antigone's closest male relative, it was Creon's responsibility to ensure that she married and produced an heir.[89] Antigone's death and her public lamentation are indeed very heroic, traditional and feminine. Suicide is the traditional death for women in ancient tragedy,[90] and "the 'nobility' that makes heroes willing to risk their lives is not exclusively male".[91]

Moreover, Antigone's death is an example of the complex interplay of self-destructiveness, arbitrary fate, ancestral curse, and ruin (*atê*) weighing upon man. Antigone knows that her act will cause her death, but she deliberately chooses to transgress the law, thus asserting her freedom of choice. On the one hand, she appropriates and forges her own fate, and on the other, the tragedy is pre-determined by the doom weighing upon her family. Antigone's life follows a pattern of transgression and suffering begun with Oedipus. Her troubled family history is recalled on several occasions, for example in the prologue (1-10; 49-50) and in the final *kommos* (892-94). The Chorus, too, often point to Antigone's misfortune in connection to her family (379-80; 471-72; 582-625; 856). Furthermore, they suggest that the gods

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[88] See Miola (2014). The Christianising aspects of Antigone's death were first emphasised by Garnier in his *Antigone* (1580), paradigm of piety and martyrdom. On other sixteenth-century versions of the Antigone myth, see section 2.1. of this thesis. On the popularity of Greek plays on Shakespearean stages, see Pollard (2017).
[89] See Foley (2001), 35. On Antigone's lack of marriage, see Seaford (1990).
[90] Loraux (1987).
[91] Scodel (2010), 109.

might have sent a form of "madness" to obscure Antigone's mind (ἐν ἀφροσύνῃ 383; ἄνοια καὶ φρενῶν ἐρινύς. 603). Ismene, too, says that Antigone's defiance is a "folly" (68; ἄνους, 99) and she is in love with the impossible (90-2). The same notion is reiterated by Antigone: σοὶ δ᾽ εἰ δοκῶ νῦν μῶρα δρῶσα τυγχάνειν, / σχεδόν τι μώρῳ μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνω (469-70).[92]

Modern authors emphasise the transgression and folly of Antigone as well as the personal guilt and agency of the characters, whereas they tend to neglect the role of the divine.[93] For example the divine disappears in Brecht's and Hochhuth's versions; in other instances, authors show a more ambiguous attitude towards the religious and ethical aspects of the play (for example in Hasenclever's *Antigone*) and the notion of fate (interestingly shaped in Anouilh's adaptation), and they expand Antigone's uncertainties and doubts, playing on the "double motivation", human and divine, often at play in Greek tragedy.[94]

The idea that man is responsible for his own mistakes is not absent in Sophocles. Antigone is said to descend *autonomos* to Hades (821), and the Chorus suggest that she acted out of a personal and free decision dictated by her temper (853-56; 875). Creon, too, admits that he is responsible for his own *hamartia* (1259-60), although he claims that he is also victim of the gods (1272-74). Both human misunderstanding and divine deception are intertwined in the complex notion of *atê*, which is, in turn, closely connected to that of *hamartia* and *kerdos*, equally crucial in determining man's ruin or success.[95]

Although she dies unwed and a virgin, Sophocles' Antigone is not completely unhappy: she does achieve at least the second-best thing for mortals – not never being

[92] See also line 602, where the notion of folly (ἄνοια) appears in connection with the *atê* threatening Oedipus' house. On Antigone's folly, see Else (1976). On terminology related to mind and madness in *Antigone*, see Goldhill (1986), 174-80.
[93] The *folie* of Antigone is critical in Anouilh's version, radicalised to the point that his Antigone does not even know why she is dying.
[94] On the question of double motivation, see Battezzato (2017).
[95] *Atê* refers to "ruin", "calamity", "disaster" – as result of an action that proved wrong or as result of a god's deception. However, *atê* can also refer to the "error", "infatuation" or "deception" that lead to ruin – the intention and action behind a certain disastrous result. This connotation is prominent in ancient Greek thought, for example in Homer, Solon, and Aeschylus; see Cairns (2013a), xii-liv. On the concept of *atê* in *Antigone*, see Else (1972), 26-7, 31, 76; Doyle (1984), 103-10; Cairns (2013b). The motif of *atê* is prominent in both Creon's (485) and Antigone's words (863-65).

born, but at least dying young.[96] Paradoxically, she considers death as a *kerdos*, a "profit" (εἰ δὲ τοῦ χρόνου / πρόσθεν θανοῦμαι, κέρδος αὔτ᾽ ἐγὼ λέγω, 461-62) and she does not regret her dire action since she knew that she had to die (θανουμένη γὰρ ἐξῄδη, τί δ᾽ οὔ; 460).[97] Elsewhere in the play, Antigone refers to her death and often provokes Creon to kill her (497-500, 559-60). She tells Ismene that she must serve the dead before the living (74-5; 559-60), since in death she shall lie forever (ἐκεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ κείσομαι. 76), and she alternates vocabulary related to death and life (θανουμένη, 460; θανοῦμαι, 462; ζῇ, 464; θανόντ᾽ ἄθαπτον, 467; οὐ ζῶσιν, οὐ θανοῦσιν, 852).

The obsession of Antigone with her death seems to point to the inevitability of the tragedy, whose dark outcome is sensed from the beginning. The idea that the heroine's death is something inevitable and predetermined has fascinated modern authors. In Cocteau's version, the sense of inevitability of the original is conveyed through the speed of his modernist tragedy, whereas Anouilh replaces the notion of fate with theatrical determinism.[98] Moreover, in various modern versions, the tragedy begins with the burial already having been performed, in a kind of "aftermath-drama",[99] thus pointing to the inevitability of the burial. This is the case in Anouilh's version of *Antigone*, in which the story and the actions of the characters are presented as inevitable and the burial, which is the trigger of the entire action, cannot be undone.[100]

Therefore, modern receptions accentuate the predictability of Antigone's tragedy and emphasise the more human aspects of the heroine, her fears, and uncertainties. They also contemplate the question of personal guilt and challenge the validity and significance of Antigone's death in a modern context. For example, in Hasenclever, the heroine's sacrifice is elevated to a martyr-like act that, albeit noble,

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[96] See Theognis 425-28; Bacchylides 5.160-62; the proverb is related to *Antigone* by Benardete (1999), 60.

[97] Her notion of *kerdos* is opposed to that of Creon, who connects *kerdos* to material, deceptive profit, leading to ruin, *atê* (221-2). Creon identifies the material *kerdos* in reference to Tiresias (1033-47; 1055; 1061; 1077-78), whereas the seer suggests that in order to secure *kerdos* (1032) Creon has to understand his own mistakes.

[98] In Anouilh, the characters' fate cannot be changed because of the "inevitable" roles imposed upon them in the theatrical fiction. See section 3.3.2.

[99] This kind of "aftermath-drama" is a rather Sophoclean pattern: Sophocles' *Ajax* begins as the trigger of the action – Achilles' death – has already happened and the *Antigone* itself can be read as "a kind of sequel" of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*.

[100] Also in Hochhuth's novella the burial has already been performed. Hochhuth's Antigone constantly thinks about her death and is afraid of dying. Her obsession with death recalls the original.

does not promote social change for the larger community. The opportunity to be heroic is pursued reluctantly by Anouilh's Antigone, whose death becomes a fruitless act unsupported by the gods (absent in the modern version): she finally admits that she does not even know the reason why she is dying. In Brecht, Antigone's death is presented as a symbolic act which serves, at best, to set a counteracting example to Creon's tyrannical rule. Anouilh and Brecht question whether the "heroism" of Antigone is possible in "real life" and whether her example is still valuable in certain historical circumstances: what is the sense of dying heroically under a dictatorship? Death is no longer a *kerdos*, a gain, for a "modern" Antigone. Albeit noble and radical, the heroine's death in a modern context proves that the individual cannot escape his inevitable fate nor oppose successfully the violence and despotism of the state.

1.4.4. The Chorus

In Sophocles' *Antigone*, the Chorus comprises the elders of the city, who represent the collective voice of the community. Because of their old age and status, they have a certain authority and wisdom. Antigone refers to them as "wealthy citizens" (843) and "princes of Thebes" (940). They belong to aristocratic and noble families. They are presented as the mature and responsible advisors of the king, although they are primarily committed to the interests of the *polis*. They comment on the action, invoke the gods and express general views and considerations on the moral and intellectual content of the tragedy, thus functioning as critical witnesses to the events. However, they also often change their mind and they might have insights that are later revealed to be wrong.[101] Only reluctantly do they express their judgement and, due to the constant presence of Creon on stage, they cannot speak freely – thus increasing the isolation of Antigone. They show some sympathy for the heroine in the last *kommos*, although they imply that her punishment is a due reward for her boldness: the tribute to her piety and the reference to her doomed inheritance represent a half-reluctant mitigation of their judgement.

[101] Commenting on the attitude of the Chorus in *Antigone*, Winnington-Ingram (2009), 137, claims that they are "the least helpful Chorus in Greek tragedy".

Because of the complexity of its lyric odes, the Chorus often represent an obstacle in modern versions, being a difficult device to adapt to a modern perspective: for this reason, modern receptions tend to marginalise or eliminate it altogether.[102] Paulin, author of an Irish version of *Antigone*, quotes Stephen Rea telling him to "go easy on the choruses ... They can be a bit of a bore".[103] Brecht compares the original choruses to "riddles asking to be solved",[104] and he employs them as anti-realistic stage device of his epic theatre. In Anouilh, the Chorus is no longer a group of Theban elders but a single man, a critical meta-observer commentating on dramaturgical matters. The Chorus is replaced by the contradictory voices of the masses in Hasenclever as well as in Sérgio's Portuguese *Antigone*, in which the crowd plays an important and active role. In the original, the Chorus never openly contradict the ruler nor show eagerness to support him; they neither approve of nor criticise of his edict – also because Creon is always on stage and would hear what they say. However, there are signs which reveal a certain malcontent, as Creon fears (290-92) and Haemon suggests (683-722). Although his claim is not substantiated, there are anonymous dissident voices whispering "in the shadows" (692-93) – voices which turn into actual rebellion and action in some later versions.[105]

In Sophocles, the songs of the Chorus are closely related to the play and its story. For example, the first *stasimon* or 'Ode to Man' (lines 332-75) might be prompted by the mysterious burial, but also by Creon's opening speech. Creon has just made his proclamation and claimed that he will do everything he can to secure the welfare of the city; and yet this Chorus, which emphasise the limits of man's skills and the instability of human law, already underlines the fragility of his faith in human rationality and power.[106] By claiming that only he who respects the justice of the gods

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[102] Cocteau greatly reduces the choral odes, which completely disappear in both Hochhuth's and Anouilh's versions. As Goldhill (2012), 82, remarks: "Modern theatre has struggled to find adequate modes of representation for a collective on stage, let alone a collective that sings and dances." Goldhill (2012), chapter 7, gives an account of the conceptualisation of the Chorus in the nineteenth century and the problems involved in its representation in modernity. Goldhill (2007), 56-79, also provides an account of the "solutions" adopted by modern authors to represent the ancient choruses.
[103] Paulin (2002), 165.
[104] Brecht (2003), 216.
[105] Fletcher (2010) forcefully argues that in Sophocles' *Antigone* the manifold voices of the *demos*, far from silent, are representative of the polyphony constitutive of a *polis*.
[106] This ode can be compared to Solon (13. 43-62) and to the first *stasimon* of Aeschylus' *Choephori* (585-601). See Cairns (2016), 59-63.

(νόμους θεῶν) will be "high in the city" (ὑψίπολις, 370), the Chorus imply that it is more important to obey the gods' laws rather than human decrees.

Because of its enigmatic nature, this Chorus prompted different translations as well as various, even contradictory, interpretations, which emphasise the idea of man's predictable self-destruction and limits – a notion that proved particularly relevant in the wake of the First and Second World Wars. Because this Chorus affected and shaped the modern understanding of the original play, it deserves a detailed analysis and contextualisation.

In the first line, the Sophoclean choral ode claims that "there are many things" that are δεινά, but man is δεινότερον; the adjective *deinos* means "formidable", with the ambivalent connotations of "clever, marvellous" but also "fearful, terrible". Man is thus the "most wonderful, terrible". The Chorus present a list of human achievements such as seafaring (334-37), agriculture (337-41), hunting, and taming (342-52), which demonstrate man's (ἀνήρ, 348) "exceptional" skills.[107] Man has devised refuge from the natural world, established societies secured by laws that hold the city together, and mastered "airy thought and speech" (φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα, 354-55). The idea that man is παντοπόρος "cunning, skilful" (360) is immediately reiterated: "man approaches no future without resource" (ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται / τὸ μέλλον, 360-61). Although man is said to be "all-powerful" (παντο-πόρος), the use of the term ἄ-πορος, employed immediately after, seems indeed to suggest the opposite, the fact that man is in fact in a state of *aporia*. The antithesis is suggested by the homoioteleuton and asyndeton, although it is then negated through a litotes: man is *not* ἄπορος. Therefore, the idea that there is a limit to man's resourcefulness, expressed in the following line, does not come as a surprise. The Sophoclean Chorus identify this limit with death, that man cannot control (Ἅιδα μόνον / φεῦξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται, 361-62), despite his skills in medicine (363-64). The Chorus point once more to the ambivalent nature of man, who is sometimes good and sometimes evil (σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν / τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων / τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἕρπει, 365-67), and emphasise that breaking the law brings ruin upon the individual and the city.

[107] In using the masculine gender, the Chorus recall Creon's assumption that a man dared to perform the burial (248) – whereas the audience knows that the responsible now is Antigone.

Both the first and second *stasima* (which also emphasise that great wealth does not last long: οὐδέν᾽ ἕρπει / θνατῶν βίοτος πάμπολυς ἐκτὸς ἄτας. 613-14) point to the instability of human existence and the irremediably flawed nature of man who, despite his potentialities, cannot escape death, foresee the future, nor fully control his own destiny. It is not surprising that this Chorus attracted the attention of later readers and philosophers, from Hölderlin to Heidegger and Brecht, who have pessimistically emphasised the guilt and monstrosity of man (rather than the role of the gods) in causing his own self-destruction in an age in which, Brecht claims, "the greatness of the individual has itself become doubtful".[108]

Because of its interpretative complexity, the first *stasimon* particularly attracted Hölderlin, who translated the passage twice: first in 1799 and then again for the complete play in 1803-4.[109] It is in this latter version that the Sophoclean original is most obviously and deliberately transfigured. Hölderlin chose to translate the Greek δεινά as *ungeheuer*, which means "monstrous" rather than "marvellous", while in an earlier translation he used *gewaltig*,[110] which can mean "violent" but also "so powerful that inspires admiration, awe".[111] The use of such violent term suggests Hölderlin's intention to underline man's monstrosity to an extreme degree. This translation can be considered a misunderstanding of the Greek or, more correctly, an active and conscious way of interpreting it.[112]

Despite the difficulties of adapting them to a modern context, the Sophoclean odes have indeed prompted radical responses in later contexts. Authors have reconfigured or integrated the choruses' philosophical teaching in different ways. Cocteau and Anouilh reduced the choruses to external, detached voices, whereas

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[108] Brecht (2003b), 80.
[109] See Louth (1998), 159-67, for a comparison between this early version and that of 1804.
[110] As demonstrated by Castellari (2011), 168-71, Brecht inserts changes in this first part of the *stasimon* only in four points, recovered from Hölderlin's first fragmented version of the Chorus which was available in Hellingrath's edition. Donner's translation also employs *gewaltig* (p. 168), which can be defended on philological grounds, too.
[111] See Gaskill (2002), 277. Hölderlin (1938), 169; 179, also refers to men as *gewaltig* in his poem *Der Archipelagus* (1800-1): "Komm ich zu dir und grus' in deiner Still dich, Alter! / Immer Gewaltiger! Lebst du noch und ruhest im Schatten", and later: "und wenn die reissende Zeit mir / Zu gewaltig das Haupt ergreifft". The term appears in Hölderlin's poem *Kolomb* too (first drafted in 1801): "Gewaltig ist die Zahl / Gewaltiger aber sind sie selbst / Und machen stumm die Männer"; see Hölderlin (1984), 184.
[112] It can be defended on philological grounds, too, and it was also adopted by Brecht in his translation. See section 3.4 of this thesis.

Hasenclever and Sérgio transformed them into a critical and highly political mob. Whereas in Hasenclever the people ultimately fall victims of their own instincts and violence, in Sérgio the popular uprising leaded by Haemon is successful. In Brecht, the members of the Chorus are complicit in Creon's crimes. Both Hasenclever's and Brecht's versions show that the final catastrophe does not occur because of a single man (the tyrannical Creon), but because of the collaboration of the masses and their inability to counteract.

1.4.5. Conclusion

This discussion of the *Antigone* of Sophocles has given an overview of the play and its inherent ambiguities and conflicts, which helped fashion a variety of *Antigones* in later periods. Because it is embedded in the context of fifth-century Athens, Antigone's heroic act "cannot serve in any simple sense a timeless, gender-free model of civil disobedience".[113] The original refers to political issues which, although set in a distant mythical past, are not completely disassociated from fifth-century Athenian reality. They are the product of a specific cultural and ideological environment and political institutions.

And yet, Antigone escapes "the taint of the parochialism of politics".[114] Because it offers no simple 'reflection' of the reality of life in Athens, Sophocles' play can be continually re-created and re-modelled into something new and continues to stimulate political responses. Although localised and specifically relevant to the democratic *polis*, the issues explored by Sophocles' *Antigone* are such that they can be applied to different contexts and they have been expanded and re-interpreted by modern "readers" to suit their own agenda. Antigone's transgression of the law and the disruption of conventional gender relations, the irresolvable tensions and moral complexities of the play have opened up varied ways of mobilising and interpreting the play's conflicts. They have provoked broader questions of leadership, civic duty, women's role in society, and the role of the individual in the community. They have

[113] Foley (2001), 175.
[114] Goldhill (2012), 156.

appealed to modern audiences and led to the creation of the iconic adaptations that form our modern conceptualisation of *Antigone* – a play of political resistance.

Thus, soon after its composition, Antigone was displaced out of its original, specifically Athenian context and found "an international resonance that made it seem relevant to every community in which it was performed".[115] In correspondence with crucial historical moments, Sophocles' *Antigone* has been performed on the modern stage and adapted to modern languages in radically innovative ways, thus becoming a canonical text for political analysis. The reception history of *Antigone* has reinforced the topicality and timelessness of the original, which took on new resonance in different cultural and historical contexts. The divergences from the original represent a displacement which inevitably occurs when an author employs a classical work, as compelling as *Antigone*, for the modern stage. But they also reinforce the continuing power of the original, and its ability to speak forcefully to modern as well as ancient audiences.

[115] Hall (2011), 56.

2. *Antigone* Before the Twentieth Century

2.1. *Antigone*'s Christianisation

In this section, I shall discuss a number of European adaptations written before the twentieth century, to show how *Antigone* was interpreted differently before its politicised variant began to prevail.[116] Most authors until the late eighteenth century expanded the emotional range of the material rather than reproducing the Greek originals faithfully, and contaminated Sophocles' *Antigone* with later renderings of the play. Throughout the Renaissance, the myth of Antigone was closely associated with Sophocles' other plays, *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus Colonus*, as well as with Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, and Seneca's homonymous tragedy, a re-interpretation of the Euripidean version.[117] Statius' epic *Thebaid*, a first-century version of the Antigone story, also had a great influence in the dissemination of the Antigone theme in this period. If opera composers were attracted by the Antigone story, the sacrificial death of a young woman being a classic opera plot, Statius' *Thebaid* proved particularly suitable because of the emphasis on Antigone's *pietas* and familial duty and because of its sentimental approach. Statius introduced Argia of Argos, Polynices' widow, who joined Antigone in her final mourning of their beloved Polynices.[118] The character of Argia replaced Ismene in most Baroque, Renaissance, and operatic treatments.

Therefore, early modern reworkings of *Antigone* gave greater attention to Christian – rather than political – aspects. As Fraisse points out, until the late eighteenth century "*Antigone* belongs more to hagiography than to the dramatic

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[116] On *Antigone*'s reception in the Western tradition before the twentieth century, see Steiner (1984), 139-42; 145-46; 154-55; 181; 195-96; Hall and Macintosh (2005), dedicated to the British theatre; Miola (2014); Pollard (2017). Cairns (2016), 121-22, also discusses briefly the reception of the play in this period.

[117] Euripides' play influenced Statius, as well as later reworkings such as the twelfth-century *Roman de Thèbes*, Jean Baptiste Racine's *La Thébaïde ou les frères ennemis* (1664), and Jane Robe's *The Fatal Legacy* (1723). See Cairns (2016), 117.

[118] Prior to Statius, Pausanias (9.25) and the Latin author Hyginus (*Fabula* 72) chose this version of the myth, with both Argia and Antigone carrying Polynices' body to the pyre where Eteocles' body was burning.

genre".[119] This is also because early modern authors engaged with later reworkings of the Antigone story rather than with Sophocles' *Antigone* in its original form. Drawing on the broader reception of the Antigone myth, early modern authors accentuated the motifs of Antigone's piety, devotion, virginity, and martyrdom, in order to reconcile Sophocles' "pagan" heroine with a Christian and patriotic perspective.

A notable example of this Christianising impulse is Robert Garnier's lyric drama *Antigone ou la piété* (1580), based on Renaissance translations of the play and influenced by Euripides', Seneca's, and Statius' later renditions of the Antigone story.[120] As the title reveals, great emphasis was placed on Antigone's filial *pietas*, presented by Garnier as something natural, intrinsic in human nature (*l'humane piété*). The French author highlighted the heroine's devotion both to her father and to God, which is identified with the Judaeo-Christian God. In Garnier's reinterpretation, the compassion and sacrificial death of Antigone prefigured Christian values of devotion and martyrdom. Moreover, in the context of sixteenth-century France's dynastic and religious civil wars, Sophocles' *Antigone* was invested with a contemporary relevance. It evoked the superiority of divine law over royal power, thus displaying "one of the root causes of tragedy in his [Garnier's] own age: the conflicting claims of secular and religious authority".[121] This period saw the conflict between Calvinists and Catholics as well as the dynastic war for the succession to the French throne, which involved the Valois and the Guise dynasties. Garnier's *Antigone* was successful in articulating the political concerns of the late sixteenth century while transposing melodramatic and Christian motifs upon the ancient myth.[122]

The piety of Antigone's act resurfaced in Jean de Rotrou's tragedy *La Thébaïde* (1639), which was indebted to Statius' *Thebaid* and to Garnier's version.[123] In Rotrou's treatment of *Antigone*, the heroine is not yet the epitome of steadfast

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[119] Fraisse (1974), 15-6.
[120] See Fraisse (1974), 20-6; Steiner (1984), 138-42; 195-96; Miola (2014), 235-36; Cairns (2016), 121. Garnier's version inspired Thomas May's *The Tragedy of Antigone, The Theban Princesse* (1631); see Steiner (1984), 196.
[121] Mueller (1980), 28, cited in Miola (2014), 236.
[122] Garnier's *Antigone* was followed a year later by Thomas Watson's Latin translation of the play (1581), which carried a moralising impulse and emphasised the sacrificial death of the young heroine. For a nuanced reading of Watson's *Antigone*, see Pollard (2017), 66-7.
[123] The tragedy premiered in Paris in 1637 and was then published in 1639. On this version, see Steiner (1984), 160-62; Torrance (2010), 246-48.

resistance but rather the symbol of piety and familial duty. Rotrou's drama did indeed raise political questions on the arbitrary absolutism of the king: like contemporary French monarchs, Creon claims the divine right of kings but then acts against the divine law. The conflict between Polynices and Eteocles occupies the first two acts and is witnessed by Jocasta, who unsuccessfully attempts to put an end to the fratricidal conflict. The dispute between Antigone and Ismene only occurs in the third act; their opposition is complicated by the presence of Polynices' widow Argia, modelled on Statius' *Thebaid* (whereas Argia does not appear in Garnier's version).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, adaptations of *Antigone* followed a similar line of interpretation. The political component of the original was neglected in favour of an emphasis on Antigone's filial piety and the romantic relation between the heroine and her betrothed. The historian Edward Bulwer-Lytton commented that the Antigone story would have been staged more often if there were more references to Antigone's lover Haemon.[124] The little importance attributed to the relationship between Antigone and Haemon was one of the reasons for the play's limited appeal in the eighteenth century – especially in Britain, where *Antigone* was first performed only in 1796 in the Italian opera of Francesco Bianchi.[125]

In Italy, Sophocles' *Antigone* became a popular classical model for celebrative and erudite operas (*opera seria*). In the form of musical dramatisation or what Steiner calls "baroque and neo-classical operatic treatments",[126] eighteenth-century *Antigones* did not focus on authenticity nor politics but rather explored the emotional range offered by the ancient myth. Haemon played the "first tenor", singing with Antigone in a lyric, celebrative and romantic style. Some examples include Giuseppe Maria Orlandini's *Antigona*, with libretto by Benedetto Pasquaglio, dramatised in Venice in 1718, Baldassarre Galuppi's opera, staged in Rome in 1751, Tommaso Traetta's successful *Antigone,* with libretto by Marco Coltellini, first performed in St. Petersburg in 1772, and Marie-Joseph Chénier's imitations of Sophocles' plays.[127] Particularly prominent was the *Antigone* by Vittorio Alfieri (librettist) and Domenico

[124] Bulwer-Lytton (1837), 551.
[125] See Hall and Macintosh (2005), 317.
[126] Steiner (1984), 155.
[127] See comprehensive list and discussion in Piperno (2010), 72-3. For further examples of eighteenth-century *Antigones*, see Steiner (1984), 153-55; Pöggeler (2004), 71.

Cimarosa (composer).[128] The opera was written in Turin and performed in Rome in 1782, with Alfieri interpreting the role of Creon. In this opera, Creon favours the wedding between the lovers in order to establish a legitimate dynasty, but Antigone refuses his offer and is thus condemned to death. Once again, Ismene was replaced by Argia, who functioned as complementary figure to Antigone, sharing her same suffering and helping her in performing the burial. The despairing love between Antigone and Haemon was represented in melodramatic and romantic tones.

In Germany, in the late eighteenth century, the success of Greek tragedy on the stage was favoured by the widespread nationalism – in reaction to the pre-eminence of neoclassical French productions – and by the development of classical scholarship and German philhellenism.[129] Goethe, appointed director of the Weimar theatre between 1791 and 1817, staged in 1809 the *Antigone* in the abbreviated version by Friedrich Rochlitz. This version, which attempted to respond to modern tastes rather than restoring Sophocles' text, was not a success and was criticised by Classicists. However, it secured the pre-eminence of Sophocles' *Antigone* in nineteenth-century European theatre.[130]

August Wilhelm Schlegel's reading of *Antigone* also played a central role in determining the subsequent popularity of the Sophoclean tragedy. Between 1798 and 1808, he delivered three series of lectures on the history of classical literature in Jena, Berlin, and Vienna. In his lectures, Schlegel formulated an influential and systematic theory of tragedy which combined an idealist and philological approach. He did not only theorise the fundaments of ancient Greek tragedy and its relation to "Romantic" literature and the modern world, but he also defined tragedy as essentially dialectical and reconciliatory – a notion which will influence Hegel's own reading of tragedy.[131] Moreover, Schlegel insisted on the perfection of Sophocles, referred to as model tragedian, "pious and holy poet" (*fromme heilige Dichter*) blessed by the gods.[132]

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[128] There is, however, some debate as to whether the female composer Mme Charrière also wrote parts of the score. See Letzter and Adelson (2001), 278; Loutte (2014).
[129] See Steiner (1984), 7-19; Bierl (2016), 259-60; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 46-53.
[130] As Hall and Macintosh (2005), 320, remark. For more details on this performance, see Boetius (2005), 36-48; Flashar (2009), 52-6; Schadewaldt (2011), 286.
[131] See Billings (2014), 98.
[132] See Steiner (1984), 3-4; Connolly and Robbins (1995), 212.

Schlegel's lectures were widely read and influential. Like Hölderlin and Hegel, Schlegel sensed the importance of ancient Greek tragedy to understand the contemporary world and emphasised its ability to "offer a unique insight into the possibilities for free action in the revolutionary present".[133] Hegel and Hölderlin were indeed successful in engaging with ancient tragedy to establish parallels with the present and their interpretations were crucial in constructing the twentieth-century reception of the political *Antigone*.

It is precisely in the early ninetheenth century, thanks to Hegel's, Hölderlin's, and Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn's political readings, that the model of Antigone as the political rebel against unjust tyranny began to surface. By engaging closely with Sophocles' specific vaiant of the myth rather than with the broader mythological saga, they marked a decisive break with the previous tradition.

2.2. Hölderlin, Hegel, and Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn

The history of *Antigone*'s politicisation began in the wake of the French Revolution (1789-1799) with Hölderlin's and Hegel's revolutionary readings of the play. These readings are of particular interest for my investigation of *Antigone*'s reception in modern Europe and of the reasons beyond its politicisation. Hölderlin was one of the very earliest post-revolutionary witnesses to the political understanding of Sophocles' *Antigone*, expressed through his highly innovative translation of the ancient Greek tragedy.[134] Hegel interpreted the *Antigone* of Sophocles as a political document which exemplifies the dialectical unfolding of history, from a clash of opposite yet equally valid positions to a final reconciliation.

Hölderlin's and Hegel's readings of the play might have prompted a prominent nineteenth-century German adaptation: Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone*, based on Donner's translation, performed in Potsdam in 1841. This staging distanced itself decisively from the previous tradition of musical dramatisations. With this production, Sophocles' *Antigone* – and not later reworkings – began to be performed regularly on

[133] Billings (2014), 104.
[134] Hölderlin's translation prompted Heidegger's interpretation of the first *stasimon*. See section 3.3.1. of this thesis.

the modern stage across Europe. The renewed interest in the Sophoclean "original" was consistent with the widespread increase in the study of Classics and the philhellenism at the start of the nineteenth century and it was favoured by the political circumstances of the time, characterised by upheavals on a grand scale – such as the French Revolution and the democratic-national upheavals of 1848.

Without Hölderlin, Hegel, and Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn, our modern conception of the *Antigone* of Sophocles would have been different. In order to illustrate the political turn that the understanding of the play took in the twentieth century it is therefore necessary to consider their engagement with the play in this crucial historical moment.

2.2.1. Hölderlin's Translation and Politicisation of *Antigone* (1797-1804)

Hölderlin's translation of *Antigone* is a fundamental political and linguistic document, which deserves particular attention because it was used as a libretto for Orff's opera and it was also the model-translation for Brecht's own interpretation of the play – significantly entitled: *Die Antigone des Sophokles. Nach der Hölderlinschen Übertragung für die Bühne bearbeitet von Bertolt Brecht*.[135] The "remarkable radicalism" (*erstaunlicher Radikalität*) of Hölderlin's translation, criticised by his contemporaries, was precisely one of the reasons for Brecht's attraction to Hölderlin's text.[136]

Hölderlin's translation was the product of years characterised by revolutions, crisis, and war (the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era). Like Hegel, Hölderlin supported the French Revolution.[137] In Hölderlin's reinterpretation of lines 79 and 907,

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[135] On this version, see section 3.4.1. of this thesis. On the presence of Hölderlin in Brecht's *Antigone*, see Castellari (2011).

[136] Weisstein (1973), 589. In particular, the "etymological literalism" of Hölderlin's translation provoked Heinrich Voss' criticism. For example, Hölderlin translates line 20 (δηλοῖς γάρ τι καλχαίνουσ'ἔπος;) as (p. 627): "Was ists, du scheinst ein rotes Wort zu färben?"; (p. 71): "What is it? You seem to dye your words with red". Page numbers refer to Bertaux's edition (1963) and Constantine's English translation (2001). On the strangeness and literality of Hölderlin's translation, see Schadewaldt (1960), 770-778; Billings (2014), 197-98. On Hölderlin and the Greeks, see Lacoue-Labarthe (1989); Billings (2010).

[137] According to Unger (1984), 2, Hölderlin showed "a growing interest in and enthusiasm for the intellectual and political ideals of the French Revolution", expressed through his poetry and especially the Hymns to the *Ideals of Mankind*.

Antigone's act is referred to as *Aufstand* ("uprising" or "insurrection"). According to him, the *Antigone* as a whole expresses a revolutionary and political aspiration: it enacts the transition from an old hierarchical political system to a new egalitarian order. In what follows, I shall discuss Hölderlin's political interpretation of the play as it emerges in his *Anmerkungen zur Antigonä*,[138] in which the author offers an explanation of the theoretical principles behind his approach to Greek tragedy and, in particular, the Sophoclean myth.

In the *Anmerkungen*, Hölderlin emphasises that tragedy emerges at times of revolution in human thinking and feeling, of *vaterländischer Umkehr* (p. 118: "patriotic reversal"),[139] as happened with the French Revolution, which is exemplary of a public enactment of such a political reversal. From the beginning to the end, tragedy is built on a series of dialectic oppositions, each generating a dramatic revaluation of moral values and political power-relations. The entire narrative of *Antigone*, which culminates with the heroine's rebellion (*Aufstand*) and death, is equated by Hölderlin to a process of continuous reversal and opposition (p. 675):

> Die Art des Hergangs in der *Antigonä* ist die bei einem Aufruhr, wo es, sofern es vaterländische Sache ist, darauf ankommt, daß jedes, als von unendlicher Umkehr ergriffen, und erschüttert, in unendlicher Form sich fühlt, in der es erschüttert ist.
>
> (p. 117) The plot in *Antigone* has the form of an unrest in which, so far as it is a matter for the nation, the essential thing is that every character, caught up in an infinite reversal and shaken through and through by it, apprehends herself or himself in the infinite form in which he or she is so shaken.

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[138] The complexity of these remarks enhanced the criticism of Hölderlin's contemporaries, who took it as an example of the "mental collapse" endured by the poet between 1804 to his death in 1843, most likely heightened by the negative reception of his translation. See Steiner (1984), 81: "There are, I believe, elements in these annotations, as there are in the *Antigonä* proper, where night intrudes … There is derangement here and a solicitation of chaos." Hölderlin's *Antigone* was rediscovered only at the beginning of the twentieth century. See Steiner (1984), 67-8; Pöggeler (2004), 79-110; Weber (2015).

[139] This is another example of Hölderlin's etymological literalism, with *Umkehr* meaning *revolutio*, a "turning around". For Hölderlin, *vaterländisch* does not mean "patriotic" in a nationalistic sense; rather, it denotes a "spiritual community" or sense of belonging; see George (1973), 42-3; Billings (2014), 191-92. On the Nazis' misinterpretation of this concept, see section 3.3. of this thesis.

According to Hölderlin, both Creon and Antigone are equally caught in this endless *Umkehr* ("reversal"), which is, in turn, connected to their different relation to divine knowledge. Whereas Creon honours (p. 116) "God as something set in law" (p. 673: *als eines gesetzten*), Antigone "recognises his [God's] supreme spirit through lawlessness" (*gesetzlos*). This "theological opposition" is evident in Hölderlin's translation of the *stichomythia* between Creon and Antigone,[140] in which Antigone claims Zeus as her own possession (p. 640):

> KREON.
> Was wagtest du, ein solch Gesetz zu brechen?
> ANTIGONE.
> Darum. *Mein* Zeus berichtete mirs nicht;
> Noch hier im Haus das Recht der Todesgötter,
> Die unter Menschen das Gesetz begrenzet;
> Auch dacht ich nicht, es sei dein Ausgebot so sehr viel,
> Daß eins, das sterben muß, die ungeschriebnen drüber,
> Die festen Satzungen im Himmel brechen sollte.
>
> (p. 84) CREON.
> Why did you dare to break a law like that?
> ANTIGONE.
> Because *My* Zeus did not dictate that law
> Nor did the justice of the gods of death,
> Here in the house who limit human laws,
> Nor did I think your word so very much,
> That humans, who must die, should break for it
> The unwritten fixed decrees in heaven.

[140] Billings (2014), 209. According to Hölderlin, the language used in the *stichomythia* is "lethally factive" (*tödlichfaktisch*), a linguistic articulation of irresolvable difference, which can culminate only in physical murder.

The law invoked by Antigone does not correspond to Creon's edict but rather to the law of her Zeus (*mein Zeus*). Such an appropriation partly distances from the original and mistranslates the Greek ethic dative μοι in line 450 (translated with the possessive *mein*).[141] The same association with the divine occurs in the final *kommos*, as Antigone recognises that as Niobe was (p. 653) "heilig gesprochen, heilig gezeuget" (p. 96: "named sacred and she / was engendered sacred"), so she is "gottlichen gleich" ("like those like God"; θεός τοι καὶ θεογεννής, 834). Such appropriation and identification with the god is seen by Hölderlin as a form of (p. 672) "heiliger Wahnsinn" (p. 114: "holy madness") and is "der höchste Zug" ("the highest trait") of Antigone, because it brings her closer to the divinity.

Antigone's "holy madness" and appropriation of the divine collide with Creon's laws and his law-regulated relationship to the divine. According to Hölderlin, the core of the entire play lies in the opposition between Antigone and Creon, interpreted as (p. 671) "der kühnste Moment eines Taglaufs oder Kunstwerks" (p. 113: "the boldest moment in the course of a day or work of art"). In the very moment of collision the two antagonists, each guilty of excess in his own domain, are "most open" in their character ("offensten in seinem Charakter"), and eventually prepared to undertake a radical change. Such a change or reversal is perceived by Hölderlin as highly political, as he claims in his *Anmerkungen* (p. 676):

> Die Vernunftform, die hier tragisch sich bildet, ist politisch, und zwar republikanisch, weil zwischen Kreon und Antigonä, förmlichen und gegenförmlichen, das Gleichgewicht zu gleich gehalten ist.
>
> (p. 118) The rational form here developing tragically is political, indeed republican, because between Creon and Antigone, the formal and the anti-formal, the balance is held too equally.

[141] Harrison (1975), 183-84, also remarks that the German verb *begrenzen*, which translates the Greek ὁρίζω (452), implies that the gods below did not establish the law but rather they limited the human law. The same identification with god occurs in Hölderlin's ode to *Empedokles*. See further remarks in Schadewaldt (1960), 275; Harrison (1975), 180; Pöggeler (2004), 96.

This political antithesis is interpreted by Hölderlin as an antithesis between "the formal" (*förmlichem*) and "anti-formal" (*gegenförmlichem*), which reflects the opposition between "Junonian" ("die abendländische Junonische Nüchternheit"), which means order, definition, and law, and "Apollonian" ("das Feuer vom Himmel"), the sphere of fire, irrationality and "holy madness", which brings man closer to the divine.[142]

The same "reversal" (*Umkehr*) which occurs in the tragedy also emerges in Hölderlin's translation, which attempts to incorporate the "Dionysiac" spirituality (*das Fremde*) of the Greeks, into the "Western", rational German culture (*das Eigene*). According to Hölderlin, only by engaging with the foreign (the *pathos* of the Greeks) can modern poetry become "patriotic" (*vaterländisch*) and express the originality and authenticity of the nation itself.[143]

The incompatibility and opposition between the two "formal" and "anti-formal" spheres, Creon and Antigone, can only result in their mutual destruction: the "new" can emerge only through the destruction of the "old". As the play ultimately reaches a synthesis, so revolutions bring about a political change and the establishment of a *republikanische Vernunftsform*. In Hölderlin's reinterpretation, this equilibrium (*das Gleichgewicht*) inclines towards the end of the play after a "caesura", helping to establish a certain balance in the succession of ideas and acts of the tragedy. The caesura is signalled by the appearance of the prophet Tiresias, whose speeches offer a distanced perspective on the catastrophic succession of event enacted by the tragedy. The caesura is designated by Hölderlin as a (p. 113) "counter-rhythmic" (p. 670: *entgegenwirkenden*) interruption which contributes towards establishing the final equilibrium.

The political stance of Hölderlin's text is most apparent after the caesura, at the end of the play. Although the tragic destruction is unavoidable, Creon ultimately learns from his mistakes. This realisation implies the reversal of all ways of perceiving things and the alteration of Creon's point of view. Such a reversal is political too, since the king is in the end reduced to a miserable man (p. 676) "von seinen Knechten fast gemißhandelt wird" (p. 118: "almost manhandled by his servants"). As Steiner

[142] Hölderlin (1963), 788. Letter to Bohlendroff (4 December 1801). For English translation, see Pfau (1988), 149. See Harrison (1975), 160; Billings (2014), 200-1.
[143] Hölderlin (1963), 788.

remarks, this virtual manhandling is a motif entirely invented by Hölderlin.[144] The whole tragedy thus exemplifies the historical process that leads to the emergence of a new, egalitarian, and "republican" order (Antigone's opposition to the law and her personal appropriation of the divine) from the destruction of the old, hierarchical system (Creon's laws).[145] Antigone's appropriation of the divinity also reflects the transition from polytheism (Creon's law-regulated relation to the gods) to monotheism (Antigone's identification with a single divinity).

The political turn taken by the play thanks to Hölderlin's innovative translation is essential for the shaping of later, politicised versions of the Antigone myth. Analogously to Hegel, Hölderlin identifies a "self-destructively creative collision" which brings forth a new order and shows the disintegration of previously universally accepted truths.[146] However, the tragedy shows that the price to pay in order to establish this new order and to achieve knowledge of what is right is suffering. A political uprising (*Aufstand*) and the death of the individual are necessary in order to conciliate these harmonious oppositions.

2.2.2. Hegel's Philosophical Reading of *Antigone* as Paradigm of History (1807)

Contemporary with Hölderlin was Hegel, whose reading of *Antigone* also had a major impact on political thinking. Even if Hegel only alludes to the drama and rarely refers explicitly to it,[147] his notorious reading of the play is fundamental in shaping the interpretation of *Antigone* as a political play. In this section, I shall discuss Hegel's analysis of Greek tragedy as it surfaces in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. Such analysis, together with Hölderlin's translation, prompted the politicisation of the *Antigone* and, for the first time, offered a strong, plausible case for the tyrant Creon and his actions. It also activated, in the last century,

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[144] Steiner (1984), 81.
[145] See Billings (2014), 223-24.
[146] Steiner (1984), 76.
[147] Tragedy first appears in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and it is prominent in the *Lectures on Aesthetics* and *History of Philosophy*. However, as Cairns (2016), 126, remarks, Hegel mentions *Antigone* only twice in his *Phenomenology*. On Hegel's theory of tragedy see Bradley (1950); Paolucci (1962); Steiner (1984), 19-42; Pöggeler (2004), 27-67; Roche (2005); (2006); Thibodeau (2013); Billings (2014).

a number of feminist readings of the *Antigone*, which interpreted Hegel's identification of Antigone with the private sphere of "family" as a gendered exclusion of the female from the public realm of politics.[148]

Like Hölderlin's, Hegel's reading of tragedy was influenced by his engagement with the political history and upheavals of the time. The historical events exemplified Hegel's understanding of history as the dynamic unfolding of revolutions: the French Revolution overthrew the *ancien régime* and established the Republic which was, in turn, replaced by the Napoleonic regime. Even if Hegel criticised the violence, internal contradictions, and ultimate failure of the revolution, he considered it a crucial turning point of human history and a "progressive" event, which contributed to the creation of a new society and moved humanity closer to the realisation of political freedom.[149]

Such a paradigm of conflict and subsequent progression to balanced values takes place in *Antigone* in a perfect way. According to Hegel, *Antigone* represents the fatal conflict that ultimately provokes the inevitable dissolution of the Greek *polis*, whose "ethical consciousness" enters in crisis and allows the spirit to progress. Such dissolution prepares the transition from Greek society and culture (and their representation of anthropomorphic gods, already questioned by Xenophanes and Socrates) to Christian modernity (and the idea of an incorporeal God). Therefore, the Sophoclean play exemplifies an earlier stage in the development of the spirit.

For Hegel, both *Antigone* and the French Revolution proved to be excellent examples of his philosophy of the Spirit and its development through a dialectical process. Although influenced by the historical circumstances of the Revolution and set within a specific phase of the spirit's progression, Hegel viewed *Antigone* and its politics in relation to metaphysical and existentialist questions. He treated politics "at its most abstract and generalized level",[150] ignoring the context and motivations of Antigone and Creon as they appear in the original. Thus, his argument "operates at the level of principle, not of the conduct of the two characters as individuals".[151] This is important because later authors, in approaching the play, distanced themselves from

[148] On modern philosophical and feminist readings of the play, see section 3.5.4. of this thesis.
[149] See Ritter (1957), 17; Smith (1989), 253-54. On Hegel's critique of the French Revolution see Suter (1971).
[150] Goldhill (2012), 231.
[151] Cairns (2016), 125.

Hegel's "abstract" model and re-politicised the original, emphasising its concrete and immediate applicability to current political situations. Therefore, although pervasive and fundamental in bringing attention to the Sophoclean original, Hegel's interpretation was assimilated and supplanted by more directly political and historicised readings in the twentieth century.

According to Hegel, the ancient Greek *polis* was characterised by two realms, divine and human, understood as "moral powers" or systems of values. Antigone represents the private sphere of the family, whereas the public sphere of the state is embodied by Creon. Each character identifies profoundly with his own partial position and denies the legitimacy of its complementary other. Each of them is equally justifiable; yet each is also wrong or limited because of its failure to recognise the legitimacy of the other, as Hegel explains (p. 113):[152]

> Da kommt die Familienliebe, das Heilige, Innere, der Empfindung Angehörige, weshalb es auch das Gesetz der unteren Götter heißt, mit dem Recht des Staats in Kollision. Kreon ist nicht ein Tyrann, sondern ebenso eine sittliche Macht, Kreon hat nicht Unrecht: er behauptet, daß das Gesetz des Staats, die Autorität der Regierung geachtet werde und Strafe aus der Verletzung folgt. Jede dieser beiden Seiten verwirklicht nur die eine derselben, hat nur die eine derselben zum Inhalt, das ist die Einseitigkeit. … Der Sinn der ewigen Gerechtigkeit ist, daß Beide Unrecht erlangen, weil sie einseitig sind, aber damit auch Beide Recht. Beide werden als geltend anerkannt im ungetrübten Gang der Sittlichkeit; hier haben sie Beide ihr Gelten, aber ihr ausgeglichenes Gelten. Es ist nur die Einseitigkeit, gegen die die Gerechtigkeit auftritt.
>
> (p. 325) Family love, what is holy, what belongs to the inner life and to inner feeling, and which because of this is also called the law of the nether gods, comes into collision with the law of the State. Creon is not a tyrant, but really

[152] For the German, see Hegel (1832), *Werke* 11-12. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion; nebst einer Schrift über die Beweise vom Daseyn Gottes*; for the English translation, see Hegel (2001). As Cairns (2016), 127, remarks, Hegel's predilection for Antigone over Creon is indeed clear, especially in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in which he speaks of "the heavenly Antigone, that noblest of figures that ever appeared on earth"; see Paolucci and Paolucci (1962), 360.

> a moral power; Creon is not in the wrong; he maintains that the law of the State, the authority of government, is to be held in respect, and that punishment follows the infraction of the law. Each of these two sides realises only one of the moral powers, and has only one of these as its content. … The meaning of eternal justice is shown in this, that both end in injustice just because they are one-sided though at the same time both obtain justice too. Both are recognised as having a value of their own in the untroubled course of morality. Here they both have their own validity, but a validity which is equalised. It is only the one-sidedness in their claims which justice comes forward to oppose.

Both antagonists represent a legitimate (though opposed) value and are not wrong in committing to the state and to the gods respectively; yet they are inevitably guilty (*schuldig*) of denying completely the other opposite principle which is also constitutive of the totality. According to Hegel, tragic guilt stems from this conflict between the obligations towards the human and divine laws, which, in turn, embodies the irresolvable binary tensions between state and family, *polis* and *oikos*, male and female, husband and wife. One relation alone escapes inequality and dialectic conflict, being "pure" and deprived of desire (which, for example, affects a husband-wife relationship) – the familial bond that ties a brother and sister (p. 247):[153]

> Sie sind dasselbe Blut, das aber in ihnen in seine *Ruhe* und *Gleichgewicht* gekommen ist. Sie begehren daher einander nicht, noch haben sie dies Für-sich-sein eins dem andern gegeben, noch empfangen, sondern sie sind freie Individualität gegeneinander.

> (p. 268) They [brother and sister] are the same blood, which, however, in them has entered into a condition of stable equilibrium … They do not desire one another, nor have they given to one another, nor received from one another,

153 For the German, see Hegel (1807), *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ch. 50-53. Against Hegel, Butler (2000) argues that, because of her incestuous origin and relation with her brother, Antigone cannot represent the sphere of "family" in opposition to the "state".

> this independence of individual being; they are free individualities with respect to each other.

Hegel believes that the brother-sister relation is the most exemplary form of "equality", as it is perfectly reciprocal, embodying harmoniously the male and female spheres – not reproducible, for example, in the relation between Ismene and Antigone (p. 248):[154]

> Sondern das Moment des anerkennenden und anerkannten *einzelnen Selbsts* darf hier sein Recht behaupten, weil es mit dem Gleichgewichte des Blutes und begierdeloser Beziehung verknüpft ist.

> (p. 269) Instead, the moment of individual self-hood, recognising and being recognised, can here assert its right, because it is bound up with the balance and equilibrium resulting from their being of the same blood and from their being related in a way that involves no mutual desire.

Significantly, Sophocles' Antigone claims that she would have not risked her life for a husband or a child, but only for a brother, whose loss is irreplaceable (οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἂν βλάστοι ποτέ, 912). These lines (909-12), which Goethe wished someone could prove spurious,[155] are central to Hegel's reading of the play. According to him, the mutual recognition between brother and sister creates a harmonious synthesis which neither Creon and Antigone nor Haemon and Antigone can achieve without struggle.[156]

Yet, also the pure relation between brother and sister undertakes a change in the moment in which Antigone feels an ethical obligation towards her brother: the necessity to perform the burial.[157] According to Hegel, burial represents an ethical

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[154] Ismene is not "equally irreplaceable" as Polynices; see Gellrich (1988), 59; Chanter (1995), 102-3.
[155] Cairns (2016), 127; endnote 31. See, most notably, Eckermann (1945), 566; Steiner (1984), 44-51; Rösler (1993), 90. Antigone's speech has been recognised as authentic.
[156] For Leonard (2015), 103, in his way, Hegel justifies "Antigone's incestuous outrage" and transforms it "into the epitome of an ethical relationship".
[157] See Burke (2013), 10; Steiner (1984), 33: "[Antigone's] view of her brother is ontological as no other can be: it is his being, his existence in and of itself, to which she assigns irreplaceable worth".

action, which asserts the role of the divine over the human law: the cult of the dead (p. 245) "vermählt den Verwandten dem Schoße der Erde" (p. 265: "weds the relative to the bosom of the earth"). By performing the burial, Antigone becomes (p. 248) "die Bewahrerin des göttlichen Gesetzes" (p. 270: "the preserver of the divine law"). Consequently, the brother-sister relationship changes and becomes ethical (p. 248):

> Auf diese Weise überwinden die beiden Geschlechter ihr natürliches Wesen, und treten in ihrer sittlichen Bedeutung auf, als Verschiedenheiten, welche die beiden Unterschiede, die die sittliche Substanz sich gibt, unter sich teilen.
>
> (p. 270) In this way both the sexes overcome their merely natural being, and become ethically significant, as diverse forms dividing between them the different aspects which the ethical substance assumes.

Antigone, aware of this distinction, commits the burial knowingly. The fact that Antigone acts consciously makes Antigone a "more reflective ethical agent",[158] as Hegel explains (p. 255):

> Das sittliche Bewußtsein ist vollständiger, seine Schuld reiner, wenn es das Gesetz und die Macht *vorher kennt*, der es gegenübertritt, sie für Gewalt und Unrecht, für eine sittliche Zufälligkeit nimmt, und wissentlich, wie Antigone, das Verbrechen begeht.
>
> (p. 279) The ethical consciousness is more complete, the guilt purer, if it knows beforehand the law and the power which it opposes, if it takes them to be sheer violence and wrong, to be a contingency in the ethical life, and wittingly, like Antigone, commits the crime.

According to Hegel, by committing the "crime" and transgressing the opposed law, Antigone fully recognises the existence and reality of an alien principle. At the end of

[158] Billings (2014), 173.

the tragedy, she acknowledges that she has erred (p. 256): "weil wir leiden, anerkennen wir, daß wir gefehlt" (p. 279: "Because we suffer, we acknowledge that we have erred"). Hegel's translation is nonetheless partial. Sophocles' Antigone claims that she shall achieve knowledge in suffering "if these things are [deemed] good among the gods" (ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν οὖν τάδ᾽ ἐστὶν ἐν θεοῖς καλά, 925). Whereas in Sophocles she only expresses a slight doubt, for Hegel Antigone's suffering opens a full revaluation of the partiality of her own principle. Only such recognition and acceptance of the validity of each point of view allows history to progress "dialectically", giving way to a new, universally valid, principle (p. 113):

> Die sittlichen Mächte, die nach ihrer Einseitigkeit in Kollision sind, sich der Einseitigkeit des selbstständigen Geltens abthun, und die Erscheinung dieses Abthuns der Einseitigkeit ist, daß die Individuen, die sich zur Verwirklichung einer einzelnen sittlichen Macht aufgeworfen haben, zu Grunde gehen.
>
> (pp. 324-25) The moral powers which are in collision, in virtue of their one-sidedness, divest themselves of the one-sidedness attaching to the assertion of independent validity, and this discarding of the one-sidedness reveals itself outwardly in the fact that the individuals who have aimed at the realization in themselves of a single separate moral power, perish.

Consequently, the hero abandons his "one-sidedness" and succumbs to the opposite power which is, in turn, also affected by this decline since the two are closely linked – Creon, too, "must suffer equal evils" as the one inflicted on Antigone. Again, Hegel only refers to the second part of the Sophoclean line and ignores the conditional of the original lines 927-28: εἰ δ᾽ οἵδ᾽ ἁμαρτάνουσι, μὴ πλείω κακὰ / πάθοιεν ἢ καὶ δρῶσιν ἐκδίκως ἐμέ ("but if these men err, let them not suffer greater evils than they do unjustly to me"). Both sides (Antigone and Creon) do indeed undergo destruction. Through suffering, they both understand that they have committed a crime – the claim for exclusivity and the failure of recognising their mutual validity. Only through conflict can man explore different moral values and activate human ethical advance; in such conciliation and parity of tension, the absolute right is accomplished. In this

way, the ethical substance and supremacy of the balanced totality is re-established, "purged of one-sidedness".[159]

Hegel's reading is enormously influential and permeates later interpretations of the play; its influence provides one of the reasons for *Antigone*'s constant presence in Western literal and philosophical tradition.[160] In discussing *Antigone* as a paradigmatic play which exemplifies the dialectic nature of history itself, Hegel emphasised its ability to transcend the boundaries of parochialism and to be "universalised" into abstract principles and binary oppositions (such as family and state, male and female) perpetually in conflict. At the same time, Hegel emphasised that the tragedy refers to a particular moment of history. He highlighted the existence of a collision, ultimately resolved, and its political nature. Tragedy, and *Antigone* in the most sublime way, expresses paradigmatically such a political conflict, which constantly occurs in history in order to mark its dialectical progression and lead to a new ethical and political value. Such a politicisation of the play proved fundamental in establishing the iconic model of Antigone as the heroine of dissent and resistance in the twentieth century. In response to Hegel's reading, twentieth-century authors re-politicised the *Antigone* and emphasised its relevance to contemporary political matters.

Both Hölderlin and Hegel reinterpreted Sophocles' *Antigone* – as opposed to later reworkings – as a political play, expressing through its dialectic enactment the political changes occurring in modern society and history. Hölderlin's translation explicitly displayed the political nature of the conflicts enacted in the play. Hegel considered *Antigone* to be the historical source and structural paradigm for his dialectical phenomenology, and thereby his conception of history. The passage of Hölderlin's and Hegel's political notions into the contemporary German consciousness proved fundamental in creating the present interpretative model of an *Antigone* emblematic of conscientious resistance.

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[159] Roche (2006), 18.

[160] On the influence of Hegel's interpretation in modern philosophical discussions, see section 3.5.4. of this thesis. The legacy of Hegel's reading of the play in post-war France is explored in Leonard (2005). On the influence of Hegel in modern scholarship, see Goldhill (2012), 138-263; Billings (2014).

2.2.3. Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone* (1841)

Another landmark moment in the political reception of *Antigone* before the twentieth century is the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn version, which premiered on 28 October 1841 at the Neues Palais Theatre in Potsdam, some six years before the revolution of March 1848. The impact of this production was "so powerful" ("so gewaltig") that Förster, in an essay published in 1842, claimed that "it can only be expected that this experiment [*Versuch*] will not remain the only one [*nicht der einzige*]".[161] The success of the Potsdam *Antigone*, which marked an "extraordinary political, cultural, and theatrical event", proved him right.[162] It was so influential that Sophocles' tragedy was granted a pre-eminent place in the second half of the century and became part of the "classic" repertoire, prompting what Steiner calls "a veritable cult of Sophocles" in Europe.[163]

The Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone* followed soon after the ascent to the Prussian throne of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, who commissioned the performance. The newly appointed king was a Christian ruler who supported the renaissance of Greek tragedies in the Prussian state, "implicitly declaring Philhellenism a sort of 'state religion'".[164] However, it is difficult to establish "how sensitive the king was to the text and what kind of political message he may have hoped it would give to the court audience".[165] The difficulties of establishing the political orientation of the court production are further increased by the fact that this *Antigone* was the result of a collective effort. Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's incidental music served to accompany the *Antigone* staged by Ludwig Tieck, elderly lecturer of the royal court (at the time almost 70 years old). The script used for the Potsdam *Antigone* was based

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[161] Förster (1842), 49-50, in Förster, Böckh, and Toelken (1842), "Über die *Antigone* des Sophokles und ihre Darstellung auf dem Königl. Schloßtheater im neuen Palais bei Sanssouci". This work includes a detailed discussion of the production, staging, and reception of the Potsdam *Antigone*.
[162] Fischer-Lichte (2010), 337. On this production, see Steinberg (1991); Hall and Macintosh (2005), 318-21; Boetius (2005); Geary (2006); Flashar (2009), 63-74; Goldhill (2012), 188-92; Geary (2014); Bierl (2016), 260-64.
[163] Steiner (1984), 9. See also Hall and Macintosh (2005), 320.
[164] Fischer-Lichte (2017), 54. Although he was a conservative ruler who supported the divine right of monarchs, Friedrich Wilhelm IV was also hoping to favour more political liberalism and establish an enlightened monarchy; however, by 1848 it was clear that it had not been realised. See also Flashar (2009), 58-63.
[165] Steinberg (1991), 146.

on Johann Jakob Christian Donner's literal translation (1839), a text that continued to be performed until the end of the First World War.[166] August Böckh, professor of Greek philology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin and colleague of Hegel, also collaborated in the production as academic advisor. He did not only alter Donner's translation to increase its philological accuracy, but he also advised on the authenticity of the production.[167]

Thus, the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone* attempted to offer the Sophoclean play in its genuine original form, without deviations and additions, and distanced itself from previous adaptations, such as Goethe's abridged version (1809). Due to a hybrid of different interpretations, the Potsdam *Antigone* was nonetheless influenced by the political persuasions of each collaborator, which increased the ambiguity of its political message. Moreover, precisely because it offered Sophocles' *Antigone* in its original form rather than later reworkings of the myth, the 1841 *Antigone* brought attention to the political aspects of the original and provoked varied political responses.

The different approaches of each collaborator are evident in the staging, orchestral music, and accuracy of the production. Tieck's staging reproduced the features of ancient Greek theatres, in the attempt to recover faithfully certain aspects of antiquity, and it was created according to the archaeological knowledge of the time, based on Genelli's *Das Theater von Athen* (1818) – which soon became outdated due to findings from the Dionysus theatre.[168] The actors occupied an elevated area on the stage, whereas the fifteen members of the Chorus and their leader stood in a circular area which recalled the Greek orchestra. The Chorus' songs, set to music by Mendelssohn, followed the original metre and were sung in unison.[169] The

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[166] See for example the production of *Antigone* by Albert Heine at the Burgtheater in Vienna (1918), based on Donner's translation; Flashar (2009), 138. This translation was, in opposition to Hölderlin's, a triumph of the academy, a "much-vaunted scholarly achievement, supported by leading classicists and the latest research into the ancient world"; Attfield (2010), 347. On Donner's translation see also Boetius (2005), 72-3; Geary (2006), 187; 209; 212; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 56.

[167] See Böckh (1842), 75-99, in Förster, Böckh, and Toelken (1842). Böckh claimed that the producers' aim was not to revive *Antigone* in its exact original form (*die genaueste Aehnlichkeit*) nor to give a pedantic imitation of the ancient model (*pedantische Nachahmung des Alterthümlichen*), but rather to convey its "overall impression" (*des Gesammt-Eindruckes*) and eternally valid principles.

[168] On the staging, see Boetius (2005), 202-34; 253-55; Geary (2006), 187-88; Flashar (2009), 68-9; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 55-7.

[169] Geary (2006), 188. The musical line was "simple and single"; see Goldhill (2012), 189. For details on Mendelssohn's techniques in composing the orchestral music, see Geary (2006), 201-3.

introduction of innovative music by Mendelssohn and the omission of some well-known conventions (such as the use of masks and the female parts played by men) simultaneously showed a clear awareness of the historical distance from the fifth century. Classical archaeologist Toelken and philologist Böckh praised Mendelssohn's music and the ability to combine ancient and modern aspects.[170] Historian and philologist Johann Gustav Droysen, in his review "Aufführung der *Antigone*", also praised the play and the solemn, sublime, and almost religious atmosphere fostered by the production's musicality.[171]

Furthermore, Tieck inserted Christianising elements in the tragedy and highlighted the parallels between Antigone and a Christian martyr.[172] Eduard Devrient, actor and theatre critic who interpreted Haemon in the performance, documents that Tieck suggested the *Antigone* of Sophocles because he believed that this tragedy was "nearer in feeling to modern Christian associations than any other".[173] In associating Antigone's burial of Polynices with Mary Magdalene taking Jesus from the cross,[174] Tieck reconciled Sophocles' "pagan" tragedy with a Christian reading and appealed to the king's ideal of a new, "Christian-German" state. The epiphany of Dionysus in the fifth *stasimon* could also be interpreted as a self-representation of the saviour king: this identification served to celebrate patriotically the emperor's "moral force", simultaneously introducing Christianising overtones in the production.[175] Contemporary reviews mention that "applause broke out spontaneously so that the whole choral hymn was repeated da capo as in opera".[176]

However, the Christian understanding of the play was criticised by philologist Böckh as inconsistent with Greek tragedy and the production's historicist approach.[177]

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[170] See Geary (2014), 82-3. On other contemporary reviews see Geary (2014), 79-98; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 58-62.
[171] See Droysen (1842), reprinted in Droysen (1894).
[172] See Fischer-Lichte (2017), 54. While Tieck was Christian, Mendelssohn was originally Jewish but he baptised as a Calvinist. On Mendelssohn's relationship with Judaism, see Steinberg (1991), 142-43. According to Botstein (1991), 22, Mendelssohn showed an "interest in the theology of Christianity and [a] reverent use of music to evoke Christian faith and religious sentiment".
[173] Devrient (1869), 224, cited and translated by Fischer-Lichte (2017), 54.
[174] On this association, see Boetius (2005), 18-27; 260-61; Flashar (2009), 70; Geary (2014), 41.
[175] See Bierl (2016), 262-63.
[176] Bierl (2016), 261. See Boetius (2005), 273; Flashar (2009), 71.
[177] Tieck and Böckh expressed contrasting points of view also in regard to Mendelssohn's music. Whereas Böckh praised the music as an appropriate evocation of ancient Greek choruses and metres, Tieck did not like it. See Steinberg (1991), 146; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 51-2.

Böckh illustrated his view of the play in an essay, originally published in the *Allgemeine Preußische Staats-Zeitung* on 15 November 1841 and republished in his own edition of Sophocles' *Antigone* (1843). In Böckh's reading, Antigone, although "pious" ("einen weiblich frommen"), "great and noble" ("gross und edel"), is presented as immoderate and "ignorant of the measure" ("des Masses unkundig"), whereas Creon is not a "bad tyrant" ("ein schlechter Tyrann").[178] He has "a masculine, strict, rational mind" ("einen männlich strengen, dem Staatsmann angemessenen Beweggrund") and he, too, could be "glorious" ("herrlich"). His position is thus partly justified and cannot be dismissed as that of an out-and-out tyrant. Rather, according to Böckh, Sophocles shows that both "noble and excellent natures ("edlen und trefflichen Naturen") are mutually destroyed because of their "arrogance and lack of prudence" ("Vermessenheit und Mangel an Besonnenheit").[179]

Steiner's claim that the production presented Creon as "a noble, tragically constrained, defender of the law",[180] is thus consistent with Böckh's reading of Sophocles' tragedy. However, the Potsdam *Antigone* did not attempt to rehabilitate Creon's position nor did it offer an explicitly Hegelian reading.[181] Rather, it is possible to assume that the audience identified with Antigone, who was, according to Böckh himself, "great and passionate" ("großartig und leidenschaftlich") but not "unfeminine" ("unweiblich").[182] Although contemporary reviews praised the acting of both Creon and Antigone, they agreed that Auguste Crelinger as Antigone conveyed "the most splendid impression and … dignified character in her fight against fate, but always in the classical style and never compromising the noble standard, even at the most emotional moment".[183]

Moreover, the emergence of a republican sentiment, which sympathised for Antigone rather than Creon, is discernible in the responses of contemporary audiences to later performances. Whereas the audience of the premiere in Potsdam comprised the

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[178] Böckh (1843), 163.
[179] Böckh (1843), 163-64.
[180] Steiner (1984), 182.
[181] See Hall and Macintosh (2005), 321.
[182] Böckh (1842), 86.
[183] Anon., *Berlinische Nachrichten von Staats- und gelehrten Sachen*, 15 April 1842, cited and translated by Fischer-Lichte (2017), 59.

cultured elite of the Prussian court,[184] later productions were staged in front of larger audiences. As Fischer-Lichte remarks, in a public performance at the Royal Theatre in Berlin, the audience included "the rich, landowning class, the *Besitzbürgertum*" but also bourgeois and craftsmen.[185] When performed before such a hybrid audience, the production had a different impact compared to the premiere in Potsdam in front of the king and his scholarly, prominent guests.

Droysen, who attended this later performance, wrote in his review: "the *Antigone* must not be a merely masterly and brilliant court festival, an artistic pleasure for the small, select circle of the highly cultured. The work is intended for the public theatre, for the whole public."[186] It is significant that a review published in 1842 in the *Königlich Privilegirte Berlinische Zeitung* had claimed that a work such as *Antigone* could be understood only superficially (*oberflächlich*) by the mass audience.[187] A contemporary diplomat and biographer, Varnhagen von Ense, also brought attention to the political aspects of the Potsdam production which, although performed in front of the king, revealed "the terrible consequences one invites when one turns the natural into a crime ... If only we could raise our voices, if only we had a lectern and a stage, a free press!"[188]

Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn *Antigone* achieved even more political relevance when performed abroad. It was staged in Paris (1843), London (1845), Edinburgh (1845), Dublin (1845), New York (1845), and Athens (1867) in different translations.[189] By 1882 the play had been performed sixty-two times. In Paris and London, the Potsdam *Antigone* was a resounding success and attracted "learned and unlearned alike".[190] Commenting on the 1845 revival of the production in Edinburgh, Thomas De Quincey claimed that "it flattered one's patriotic feelings, to see this noble

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[184] Förster (1842), v, documents that, in addition to the king, princes, and dukes of the Royal House, the audience included "Generale, Professoren, Minister, Dichter, Geheimerähe, Theater-Direktoren, Gesandte, Prediger, Künstler, Kammerherrn, Bischöfe" etc.
[185] Fischer-Lichte (2017), 62.
[186] Droysen (1894), 146, cited and translated by Steinberg (1991), 149.
[187] Cited in Boetius (2005), 63.
[188] Von Ense (1863), 359, cited and translated by Fischer-Lichte (2017), 65.
[189] See Flashar (2009), 89-92; 96-8; Boetius (2005), 262-303; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 62; 66-7. On the reception of the performance in London, where *Antigone* was performed forty-five times, see Hall and Macintosh (2005), 321-36. On the the overtly political Dublin *Antigone* see Macintosh (2011); on the Paris production see Macintosh (2009b); on the less successful production in New York, see Macintosh (2015).
[190] Hall and Macintosh (2005), 321.

young countrywoman [Helen Faucit] realizing so exquisitely, and restoring to our imaginations, the noblest of Grecian girls [Antigone]".[191] De Quincey did not only admire Antigone and the "statuesque" splendour of Helen Faucit's performance ("What perfection of Athenian sculpture! The noble figure, the lovely arms, the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the ideal statuesque"),[192] he also perceived the tragedy's "breathless waiting for a doom that cannot be evaded; a waiting … for the last shock of an earthquake, or the inexorable rising of a deluge".[193]

By investigating the impact of the Potsdam *Antigone* and its aftermath, it is thus possible to discern the emergence of a political interpretation and interest in the subversive potential of the ancient tragedy, which did not correspond to the producers' original intentions. The producers were primarily interested in reviving Greek tragedy to the modern stage in accurate, historicised fashion, rather than emphasising the pressing socio-political issues raised by the play and their relevance to the contemporary world. However, the historicising impulse was also combined with more modern features and with Christianising aspects. As Macintosh remarks, the historical accuracy of the production, its music, staging and costumes, rather than its political message, were responsible for securing the pre-eminent success of the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn version.[194] The success of the Potsdam *Antigone* was certainly due to the combination of the classicising elements of the ancient myth with a historicist approach and the appeal to modern taste and conventions. At the same time, its enduring influence was due to the political relevance of the ancient tragedy. The inherent political elements of the original, uncovered by Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn's relatively faithful staging of *Antigone*, prompted broader political concerns, discernible in the reactions of contemporary audiences. If the overall performance responded to the Kaiser's ideological, cultural, and political program and appealed to his vision of a new Prussian state, its political features and ambivalence also favoured opposite interpretations, more sympathetic to Antigone and her defiance.

The approach of this *Antigone*, which combined politics and drama, classicising authenticity and Christianising elements, soon extended to other

[191] De Quincey (1846), 160.
[192] De Quincey (1846), 160.
[193] De Quincey (1846), 157.
[194] Macintosh (1997), 287-88.

performances of Greek tragedies across Europe. Thus, the Potsdam production granted the play enduring prominence in the European repertoire and represented an important step forward in the play's politicisation. Although it was not the producers' intention to exploit the political potential of the Greek past to establish connections with the present, the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn court production paved the way for later versions which highlighted the political features of the play and its subversive potential. Classical allusions were exploited to convey the political in a text whose inherent political ambiguity interacted with the ideological program of the Prussian king in the original production, as well as with different historical and geographical contexts in later imitations.

3. *Antigone* in the Twentieth Century

3.1. The First World War

Sophocles' *Antigone* was a popular Greek tragedy in the twentieth century, a period of dictatorship, crisis, and devastating conflicts. It is in this century that *Antigone* was re-politicised and became a symbol of resistance against the tyranny of power. During the turbulent years of the First World War and in the inter-war period, playwrights began to emphasise the political potential of the play. The "mythical distance" allowed them to comment on political and contemporary issues while avoiding censorship. Antigone's unsuccessful attempt to bury her brother reflected the desire to access the bodies of the fallen soldiers killed in the "fratricidal conflict" that divided nations in the midst of war.[195]

Such political reading was indebted to Hölderlin's and Hegel's influential interpretations. However, the political understanding of *Antigone* in this period was also conditioned by the specific historical circumstances of the First World War, which opened the way to a further re-politicisation of the Antigone story. Against Hegel's "universalising" interpretation of *Antigone* as representative of the opposition between two abstract principles (state and family), twentieth-century authors interpreted the play within the specific political context of the First World War and used it as a vehicle for political critique. This is the case in Walter Hasenclever's *Antigone* (1917): in his interpretation, the heroine is understood as an icon of pacifism as well as principled dissent and resistance, calling for reconciliation and peace.

[195] See Henderson (2001) on the issue of burial and *Antigone* during the First World War (in particular in reference to Hasenclever's version).

3.1.1. Walter Hasenclever's *Antigone*

1. Introduction

This section examines a little-known example of *Antigone*'s reception in the twentieth century: the adaptation by the German expressionist writer Walter Hasenclever. After contextualising this play in contemporary scholarship, this chapter considers the historical circumstances of the play's production and analyses those divergences from the original that more explicitly transform Hasenclever's drama into a play of political resistance.

Hasenclever's drama is the first and arguably most innovative of several European adaptations of Sophocles' work to appear in the first half of the twentieth century. Although successful at the time of its production, Hasenclever's *Antigone* is scarcely read in contemporary scholarship and discussed mainly in German-language scholarship.[196] The only English translation of the play available is rather out of date.[197] The absence of Hasenclever in contemporary scholarship can be explained by the fact that his *Antigone* lacks the complexity of later adaptations, such as Anouilh's and Brecht's. The political allegory of Hasenclever's *Antigone* is rather transparent: the drama displays in clear terms the opposition between Antigone, the "good" heroine who sacrifices herself for the people, and Creon, the "bad" tyrant, transformed into a caricature of Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Another reason for the neglect of Hasenclever's play in contemporary scholarship can be detected in the intrusion of strikingly dramatic and Expressionistic features in the adaptation. The author superimposes on the Greek legend Christian motifs and terminology as well as expressionist features, such as the apocalyptic finale,

[196] While Hasenclever scholarship has generated relatively few studies from the early 1960s, work on Expressionism has been extremely productive. The most recent contribution to Hasenclever's life and works is Kasties (1994a-b); Kasties, co-editor of Hasenclever's letters, makes extensive use of Hasenclever's *Nachlass*, housed at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar (referred to as: DLA). Spreizer (1999) is the first general study in English on Hasenclever, contextualised within the Expressionist literary movement. Hoelzel (1983) presents an overview of the major themes of his works. This chapter is an expanded version of my article, Zetti (2018), which is the most recent article on Hasenclever's *Antigone*.

[197] Ritchie and Stowell (1969), 113-60. There is an Italian translation by Fornaro (2013).

Antigone's depiction as a messianic figure,[198] as well as the shocking representation of the miserable masses, which replace the Sophoclean Chorus. The essential language, devoid of adornment, also responds to the Expressionist style. Because grounded in the historical context of 1916-17 and because it does not have the subtle complexity of later adaptations, Hasenclever's drama has not appealed to modern readers and scholars.

However, I believe that Hasenclever's version represents an important historical moment in the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* and is a notable example of the political and Expressionist reception of a Greek tragedy. Although not as popular as Anouilh's and Brecht's versions today, it deserves to be included in the reception history of *Antigone*'s politicisation and transformation as a vehicle for contemporary political critique. It is particularly interesting because it explicitly situates the *Antigone* of Sophocles as a political work and it represents a crucial step towards the development of the political interpretation of the play.

2. Historical and Political Background

Hasenclever wrote *Antigone* during his military service in Macedonia. He then completed the tragedy between 1916 and 1917 while in Dresden. After he was given military leave to oversee a production of *Der Sohn*, Hasenclever feigned mental illness in order to escape further military service.[199] Therefore, he was admitted to Dr Teuscher's Sanatorium outside Dresden, where he completed the tragedy. Here he continued an active social and literary life, committing himself to the cause of the Activists, that literary branch of Expressionism that flourished under the leadership of Heinrich Mann, Kurt Hiller, and Ludwig Rubiner.[200]

Even if Hasenclever did not associate himself with a political doctrine, he sympathised with the political left-wing and he opposed the monarchist and the conservative right-wingers.[201] In the political works written during the years of the

[198] On German Expressionism and Messianism see Anderson (2011).
[199] See Fornaro (2013), 11.
[200] Hoelzel (1983), 55.
[201] See Hoelzel (1983), 83.

First World War, including *Der Retter* (1915),[202] *Tod und Auferstehung* (1913-16), and *Der politische Dichter* (1919), Hasenclever renounced the youthful rebelliousness characteristic of his early works in favour of a politically-oriented opposition aimed at activating a change in society. *Antigone*, too, is an Expressionist work that belongs to this particular phase of Hasenclever's oeuvre. In the post-war years, Hasenclever expressed his disillusion towards political activism, abandoned the Expressionist style, and wrote more conventional comedies.[203]

When he was composing his *Antigone*, the German offensive at Verdun and the Allied counterattack on the Somme had resulted in an unprecedented loss of human life.[204] Under such conditions, burial was a difficult task to perform: many soldiers were buried in mass graves, or on the spot where they fell, in foreign soil isolated from the home front. The German State was often unable to return soldiers' bodies to their families. Many corpses were in fact unidentifiable or missing. The German people therefore shared the same trauma of loss and negation of burial experienced by Antigone in the Sophoclean tragedy: the repeated return to the corpse and the unsuccessful attempt to bury Polynices reflected Germany's desire to access the war dead. Informed and enriched by the events occurring in contemporary Germany and Europe, Hasenclever's adaptation provided a framework for confronting the shock of human fragility and for expressing a "communal mourning" during the tragedy of the First World War.[205]

Written at the height of the Russian Revolution and First World War, Hasenclever's adaptation becomes a condemnation of all kinds of injustice, as well as a call for peace and resistance against the autocratic oppression and tyrannical power embodied by Creon and his followers. Hasenclever introduces changes to the original

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[202] *Der Retter* in particular bear resemblances with *Antigone*: both plays see the contraposition of opposed points of view – the Poet and the State minister, Creon and Antigone. Both the Poet and Antigone oppose the established rule of the king and sacrifice their life to help humanity. Like Antigone, the Poet of *Der Retter* encourages the rulers to "love" (a pregnant word in Hasenclever's *Antigone*) the enemies. See Hasenclever (1919), 40. For a comparative analysis of the two dramas, see Hoelzel (1983), 59-76.

[203] Kasties (1994a), 11.

[204] Launched by the German Fifth Army on 21 February 1916, the battle of Verdun lasted until the final French counterattack was ended on 19 December 1916. About 281,000 Germans and 315,000 Frenchmen were killed or wounded in the battle. See Foley (2012).

[205] According to Henderson (2001), 64, the unfinished burial "invests the drama with a common frustration felt by mourning groups in Germany throughout the war".

in order to draw parallels with the contemporary reality of the time and to make the ancient tragedy his own, "an *Antigone* from 1917".[206] In his *Antigone* Hasenclever portrays the rebellion of the masses against a Kaiser-like Creon, encouraged by the revolutionary speeches delivered by Antigone. At the end of the tragedy, Creon abdicates, as the Kaiser Wilhelm II will do in November 1918, following a period of popular unrest and violence.[207]

Although Hasenclever had finished his *Antigone* before the Russian Revolution (and before the abdication of the Kaiser), his adaptation is remarkably prophetic and demonstrates that revolutionary politics were already impending in the background of 1916-17. After the end of the war, once the audience had experienced the Russian and Spartacist revolutions, Hasenclever's play achieved additional resonance and it was acclaimed as a "revolutionary manifesto".[208] Hence the play was readapted in 1927 in the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow, adapted by Sergey Gorodetsky and directed by Alexander Tairov, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution (1917).[209]

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[206] Kasties (1994a), 286: "die ganze Anlage wird Sie von der eigenen Arbeit bezeugen und davon, daß diese *Antigone* doch von 1917 ist". Translated by Henderson (2001), 49: "The whole setting will convince you that it is my own, and that this *Antigone* is from 1917".

[207] According to Flashar (2009), 127, "Kreon ist der majestätische Tyrann und als solchen ein Zerrbild von Wilhelm II". It can be questioned to what extent it was obvious to a non-insider in 1917 that Germany would be defeated and the Kaiser would renounce his power.

[208] Garten (1959), 132. Hasenclever was perhaps influenced by Romain Rolland, a French playwright, critic, and propagandist closely connected to the French popular theatre movement known as "Theatre of the People". His book *Le Théâtre du people* (1903), which inspired similar trends in other countries, theorised the movement's ideal: to create an accessible art theatre directed at a broader public and, specifically, a popular public. Similarly, Hasenclever wanted to appeal to the audience through his works, and urge the masses to react against oppression and injustice. On Rolland's Theatre of the People, see Fisher (1977).

[209] In order to bring the tragedy closer to the Revolution, Tairov's performance emphasised the spontaneous uprising of the masses, Creon's dictatorial oppression, and the rise of Antigone as a spokesman who inflames the crowd. See Levy (1977), 508-19. See illustration 1.

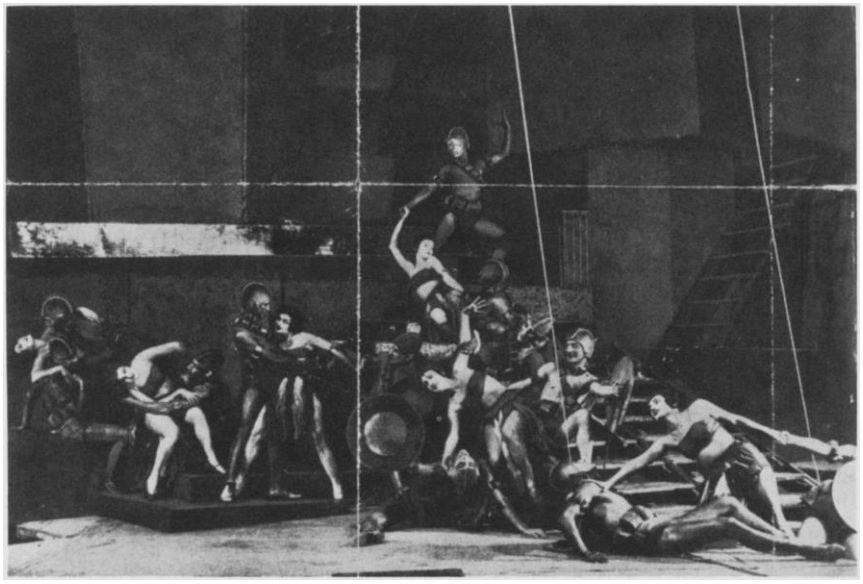

Fig. 1. Hasenclever's *Antigone* directed by Alexander Tairov, Kamerny Theatre, Moscow, 1927. Elwood (1972), 4.

3. Under the "Mask" of Greek Tragedy

In a letter to Albert Ehrenstein, written shortly after completing the drama, Hasenclever testified that he aimed to contemporise the play and that he knew Sophocles' *Antigone* "only superficially" (*nur flüchtig*).[210] Although the author claimed limited familiarity with the ancient text, he had probably read classical texts at the Gymnasium where he studied until 1908.[211] Moreover, the classical tradition had been prominent in Germany from the eighteenth century thanks to German poets such as Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, and Rilke. Butler reckons that the extent of Greek influence "is incalculable throughout Europe; its intensity is at its highest in Germany".[212] *Antigone* in particular had become part of the "classic" repertoire in Germany since the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn production in Potsdam (1841).[213] Thus, it seems likely that Hasenclever was influenced, in his choice of *Antigone*, by

[210] Kasties (1994b), 286. Translated in Henderson (2001), 49.
[211] See Hoelzel (1983), 11; Kasties (1994a), 38-44; Fornaro (2013), 26. Perhaps Hasenclever's military service in Greece was also influential in prompting the author's attraction to the Classics.
[212] Butler (1935), 6.
[213] See section 2.2.3. of this thesis.

such a classical tradition. Ancient influences characterise Expressionist dramas such as Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* (1904), Reinhard Sorge's *Odysseus* (1911), Otto zur Linde's *Charontischer Mythos* (1913), Rudolf Pannwitz's *Dionysische Tragödien* (1913), Gottfried Benn's *Ithaca* (1914), Franz Werfel's *Die Troerinnen* (1916), Oskar Kokoschka's *Orpheus und Eurydike* (1918), and Georg Kaiser's *Der Gerlettete Alkibiades* (1920), among others. In particular, Hasenclever had been an extra in Max Reinhardt's spectacular production of Sophocles' *King Oedipus* in Leipzig in 1911.[214] It is evident in the correspondence with his friend and fellow writer Kurt Wolff that Hasenclever was aware of the political danger of his version of *Antigone.* In a letter of May 1917, shortly before the premiere of the play at the Stadttheater in Leipzig, Hasenclever spoke of his *Antigone* as "an abstraction of the personal and experienced".[215] The choice of adapting *Antigone* therefore relied both on the political relevance of the ancient play and on the opportunity to draw parallels with the contemporary reality of the time, favoured by the versatility of the original.

Despite the marked political significance of the play, Hasenclever's *Antigone* was able to avoid censorship. During the war, it went through eight reprints as a book and received the Kleist prize for drama in 1917, under the reign of Kaiser Wilhelm II.[216] Scenes from *Antigone* were first published in *Das Flugblatt Wien* in 1917; in the same year, it was printed in its entirety in *Die weissen Blätter* and published by Paul Cassirer. Hasenclever gave a public reading of his own work in Leipzig in 1917, where the play also premiered (15 December 1917), after the October Revolution.[217]

After the end of the monarchy and the lifting of censorship laws, Hasenclever's *Antigone* was performed at the Frankfurter Schauspielhaus under Richard Weichert's

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[214] See Pinthus (1963a), 14; Spreizer (1999), 76. On this production, see Fischer-Lichte (2017), 108-15. Hasenclever was inspired by Reinhardt's use of the masses; see Fornaro (2013), 29-30.

[215] Letter to Kurt Wolff (1.5.1917, Dresden, DLA): "dagegen ist *Antigone* eine reine Abstraktion vom Persönlichen und Erlebten: glauben sie, daß das gelungen ist?" To Kurt Wolff, he wrote too: "die *Antigone* im Februar urauffuhren will: bitte äußerste Diskretion!" (18.8.1917, Dresden, DLA).

[216] See Kasties (1994b), 166-67.

[217] Pinthus (1963a), 26, reports that, after his release from the sanatorium, Hasenclever toured the country giving public readings of his work "as a wandering poet". This anecdote is also mentioned in a letter to his brother; see Haak (1982), 175. According to Pinthus (1963a), 26; Elwood (1972), 50; Pöggeler (2004), 10; Flashar (2009), 128, the play premiered at the *Leipziger Stadttheatre* on 15 December 1917. Kasties (1994a), 166, alone argues that the premiere took place in Frankfurt on 20 February 1919; in a letter to Kurt Wolff from 1918, Hasenclever wrote: "Ich wünsche nicht zu sterben, bevor ich dies Stuck auf der Bühne sah! Wenn Sie in der Uraufführung nicht neben mir stehen, fährt ich mit Ihnen nicht nach Paris", thus implying that he did not attend the premiere in Leipzig (24.4.1918, Dresden, DLA).

direction with Gerda Müller in the title role (20 February 1919).[218] It was a particularly crucial historical moment since only few days before (6 February 1919) the parliamentary democracy had been established and Friedrich Ebert elected first *Reichspräsidenten*.[219] The play was then restaged in Berlin with Karlheinz Martin as director at Max Reinhardt's Großes Schauspielhaus (18 April 1920),[220] and in Moscow in 1927.

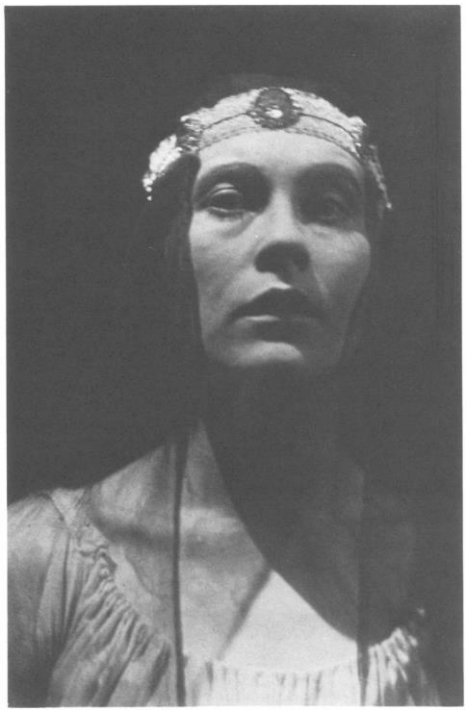

Fig. 2. Gerda Müller as Antigone in Hasenclever's play at the Schauspielhaus, Frankfurt, 1919. Elwood (1972), 68.

[218] See illustration 2.
[219] See Rühle (1967), 146.
[220] See illustration 3.

Fig. 3. Emil Jannings as Creon in Hasenclever's *Antigone* directed by Karlheinz Martin in Berlin, 1920. Fornaro (2013), 188.

When Hasenclever's adaptation was first published, the critics' opinion of the play was divided, depending on their political affiliations.[221] The director Richard Weichert wrote enthusiastically of the play as a *document humain*.[222] Most critics felt "Hasenclever's changes to Sophocles' *Antigone* captured the essential spirit of Germany's wartime trauma".[223] Yet the play was criticised by Bernard Diebold, who condemned the "intrusion" into the legend of the World War and the caricatures of such leaders as the Field Marshall, perhaps intended to depict Ludendorff.[224]

Written at a time when the censorship of the arts was widespread, it is indeed quite surprising that Hasenclever's politically oriented play was able to elude it.[225] Hasenclever's other tragedy *Der Retter* encountered numerous obstacles with publishers and censorship.[226] By contrast, in *Antigone*, the classical facade allowed the

[221] Flashar (2009), 129. See also Haak (1982), 163.
[222] Weichert (1919), 118-19.
[223] Henderson (2001), 49.
[224] Diebold (1919) reprinted in Rühle (1967), 148.
[225] On military censorship see Allen (1974); Natter (1999), 35-46.
[226] *Der Retter* was written between 1914 and 1915, during Hasenclever's military service in Ghent and in Galicia. Hasenclever had been trying to find a publisher or theatre for *Der Retter* since 1915 and the

author to address sensitive political issues openly if indirectly. Hasenclever himself argued that his *Antigone* was a "political manifestation" and that he gave the ancient classical play a contemporary interpretation in order to confuse the censors.[227] Therefore, his polemic against an authoritarian Germany was camouflaged under the mask of classical tragedy:[228] the topical allusions to contemporary government and the critique of Prussian tyranny did slip past the censors, who believed it to be an innocent classical play.

This period is therefore a crucial moment for the canonisation of the *Antigone* of Sophocles as a political work: the character of Antigone was particularly attractive because she allowed playwrights to present their political ideals within the classical tradition. The ancient story was politically reinterpreted by Hasenclever and transformed into a completely new and independent work of art, which reveals the significance of Classics in addressing the urgent questions of twentieth-century life.

4. Hasenclever's *Antigone*: das Volk von Theben

Hasenclever's drama consists of five acts, marking a rhythmic progression: from an apparently re-established order to a crucial confrontation, disorder, and final destruction. It opens with the herald's proclamation that "the war is over" and "the city is free", and culminates with the final disintegration of Thebes. The climax of the play is reached in the third act, which sees the confrontation of Antigone and Creon.

The play's first scene is drastically changed: while Sophocles' *Antigone* begins as Antigone and her sister Ismene exit the palace, Hasenclever's adaptation sees the entrance of the herald, followed by the cacophony of voices from the downtrodden masses, *das Volk von Theben* (p. 13):

> Der Krieg ist aus. Die Feinde sind geschlagen.
> Die Stadt ist frei.

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play premiered only in 1919. Despite the pressures of censorship, Hasenclever managed, in a private printing, to send copies of the play to fifteen literary and political figures; however, in 1917 the police seized and destroyed the printing plates. See Spreizer (1999), 71-5.

[227] Pinthus (1963b), 507.

[228] Spreizer (1999), 76.

The war is over. The enemies are defeated.

The city is free.[229]

After the herald exits, accompanied by victorious trumpets, the crowd appears on the stage in its many components, identified simply as *Bürger*, *Krieger*, *Frauen*, or *Stimmen* (Citizen, Warrior, Woman, or Voices). They lament the worsened living conditions, as well as the loss of their kinsmen and the scarcity of food provisions (p. 16): "Unsre Männer sind tot. Wir haben Hunger. Gebt uns zu essen!"; "Our men are dead. We are hungry. Give us food!" In front of the king, the crowd complains (p. 29): "Wir haben Hunger. Wir müssen arbeiten. Arbeiten für die Reichen. Sie geben uns nichts"; "We are hungry. We must work. Work for the rich. They give us nothing". This opening scene exemplifies the distance of Hasenclever's play from the original, and its contemporary and political stance. Hasenclever represents the struggle of the people of Thebes who, exactly as the German people, have experienced a dramatic, lengthy conflict and a traumatic moment of massive human loss.

The people also comment upon Creon's edict, Thebes' war, and Oedipus' curse. They are characterised by contrasting voices: a citizen says (p. 16) "Der Krieg ist schön" ("War is beautiful"), while other people claim "Wir wollen keinen Krieg mehr!" ("We want no more wars!"); the youths want military glory whereas the elders and women desire peace. This is because the mob is a mutable and eclectic corpus, made of people of different gender and of different social and age classes. What they all share is a sense of frustration and grief. They have experienced the same horrors and loss during the war. In Antigone's own words, they are (p. 56) "Brüder in Schmerzen!" Nonetheless, Antigone's "brothers in pain" do not show a collective conscience nor any ability to organise a political action; rather, they follow their base instincts, inherent in human nature.[230]

Hasenclever's decision to omit the Sophoclean Chorus and let the people speak first is a rather innovative and striking departure from the original. In his adaptation,

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[229] All quotations are taken from Hasenclever (1917a). English translations are mine.

[230] Hasenclever describes the instincts of the masses also in the poems "Die Mörder sitzen in der Oper" (1917) and "Die Menschen" (1918).

Sophocles' great 'Ode to Man' (332-75) is omitted, as are the other choral odes, but their substance is partially absorbed into these mob scenes. The function of Hasenclever's mob is indeed different from that of the Greek Chorus, which repeatedly intervene in the action and serve to comment on and explain the story and its moral content. In Hasenclever, the voices of the masses are never extended to the lyricism of the choral interludes of ancient Greek tragedy; yet Hasenclever gives the mob a greater and more active role: people effectively rebel against Creon and his unjust government, which forces them to pay taxes, suffer privation and the loss of their kinsmen. Their discontent leads to actual disobedience and rebellion, enhanced by Antigone's compelling call to peace and justice.

By contrast, in the Sophoclean original, the Chorus is more inclined to support Creon and disapprove of the heroine's deed. In their eyes, her "self-willed temper" is the ultimate cause of her own death (862-65). As Creon remarks, Antigone is alone in all Thebes (508) and she is extremely isolated throughout the play. At line 505, Antigone provokes Creon by arguing that the people are on her side, but "fear grips their tongues"; Haemon, too, claims that "the whole populace of Thebes" approves of her action (733). However, such a claim is not corroborated: no popular revolt is enacted or even attempted in the ancient original, as people respect the rule of the state. In Hasenclever's play, the crowd's attempts at overthrowing the state ultimately fail. At the beginning, Hasenclever's crowd shows hostility and suspicion toward the Princess, symbol of a royal and privileged status. Someone cries (p. 50): "Prügelt sie zu Tode!" ("Hit her to death!") and another voice even suggests: "Wir wollen ihr Fleisch verteilen" ("We want to distribute her meat"). Their violence is turned against Creon at the end of the play, and only Antigone's voice from the grave holds back the masses from destroying themselves.

Therefore, the masses are represented in a negative light: the collective power of the crowd does not evolve into a constructive and positive action. In a letter to his brother dated from 1918, Hasenclever expresses his pessimism and disillusionment towards the effectiveness of popular rule, which can easily degenerate into anarchy.[231] It is through the actions of the masses, rather than through the lyrical Sophoclean odes,

[231] See Kasties (1997), 7.

that Hasenclever teaches a similar lesson: human skills, though great, are limited, and can easily relapse into confusion and ruin. Such pessimism towards the progression of humanity reflects the famous second *stasimon* of Sophocles' *Antigone* (583-625) in which the Chorus speaks of man's capacities together with his limits: although the source of incredible progress, man is also the cause of much catastrophe and destruction.

5. Hasenclever's Antigone: A Political Demagogue and Uncompromising Female Spirit

The confused and malleable crowd, changing sides from the beginning to the end of the tragedy, stands in opposition to the potency of great individuals, namely Creon and Antigone. Hasenclever's Antigone entertains the highest ideals for the masses but she soon realises their crude and materialistic instincts. Initially, the heroine is able to convince the people to act and rebel through her speeches, delivered in a crucial moment of the tragedy. After her encounter with Creon, Antigone appears before the crowd as a fiery revolutionary and social agitator, who calls for revolution and freedom against the principle of power, manifested in the authoritarian dictatorship of Creon. Antigone exhorts the people to rise, unite against oppression, and become brothers. Such a public call to revolution and humanity, directly addressed to the people, takes a large part of the action, whereas it is absent in the ancient original.[232]

Antigone's call for peace and resistance reflects the political ideals of contemporary political leaders such as Rosa Luxemburg and Constance Markievicz, to whom Hasenclever dedicated a poem. Both women were intellectuals and political activists: Countess Markievicz was born of noble stock, in comfort and luxury, but she chose to fight for the unfortunate against the privileged – like Hasenclever's Antigone; Rosa Luxemburg, together with Karl Liebknecht, was the founder of the anti-war *Spartakusbund*, a revolutionary movement radically opposed to the war that sought to promote in Germany a revolution similar to the one that occurred in Russia. Hasenclever's extant writings do not mention Rosa Luxemburg (who was to be

[232] Antigone addresses the people directly only in her final *kommos* (808-9).

released from prison in 1918), but he dedicates a 1917 poem, "Die Mörder sitzen in der Oper" to Karl Liebknecht, later published in *Der politische Dichter* (1919).
Like a political demagogue, Hasenclever's heroine invokes a "popular revolt" aiming at the establishment of a "revolutionary pacifism". In her speeches to the masses, Hasenclever's Antigone claims (p. 55):

> Ich wollte hinausschreien und warnen: hört auf, Menschen!
> Ihr irrt euch, seid betrogen.
> Vereint euch, helft eurem Geiste,
> Werdet Brüder.
>
> I wanted to scream out and warn: stop, Man!
> You are mistaken, you are deceived.
> Unite, help your spirit,
> Become brothers.

Hasenclever's heroine also expresses faith in the power of women and encourages them to sacrifice (p. 70):

> Ihr Frauen, unterjocht und untertan,
> Brecht auf, ihr Frauen, aus dem engen Geschlecht!
> Geht hin und opfert euch.
>
> You women, subjugated and subdued,
> Break free, you women, from the boundaries of your sex!
> Go and sacrifice yourself.

Hasenclever's Antigone, a woman, is the only character in the play who refuses any compromise and who does not change her ideals throughout the tragedy. By contrast, Creon renounces his earlier beliefs at the end of the play, when his political power has collapsed. Haemon, too, fights against Antigone, and only after a crucial confrontation with the heroine (which does not occur in the Sophoclean original) does he undertake

a change and is quickly converted to her "religion of love": from saying (p. 65) "Ich hasse Dich" ("I hate you") he ultimately asserts (p. 68) "Ich rette Dich" ("I save you"). By reshaping the Greek heroine into a popular leader, who appeals to the masses and their feelings, Hasenclever hoped to activate in his audience the social awareness necessary to defeat tyranny. He expressed the belief that, if guided by a powerful individual, people in contemporary Germany are potentially able to rebel collectively and to establish a new peaceful world – destined to remain only an ideal for him and his generation.[233]

6. The Law of *Liebe*: Love for the Fallen Soldier, Love for Humanity

In her speeches and throughout the tragedy, Hasenclever's Antigone constantly invokes brotherhood and humanity and speaks of the necessity for men to love each other in order to prevent war. For example, she is able to appeal to the emotions of the people by saying (p. 52): "Gewiß hat jeder von euch einen Lieben" ("Surely each of you has a beloved one") and "Rufen euch Liebe und Liebe ins Herz" ("Call for love and love in your hearts"). Hasenclever's Antigone, like her Greek predecessor (523), is born to join in love and not in hatred.

In the original version, love appears in the form of *erôs* and *philia*, and both are closely related to the institution of the *polis*. The deceiving and powerful force of *erôs* emerges in the Sophoclean third *stasimon*, which follows Creon's dialogue with Haemon, also centred on the notion of love. For Sophocles' Antigone, the bond of *philia* represents a dedication to all her dead family members, by virtue of a higher unwritten law (the law of the gods), and is not extended to the enemies, *echthroi*. Sophocles stresses the *philia* between blood-relatives: Ismene and Antigone, Antigone and Polynices, in contrast to the hostility towards the enemies. Sophocles' Antigone considers her brother *autadelphos* (503; 466-7; 511), and constantly emphasises the shared blood and sharing of the same womb with him. A similar primacy of kinship ties is demonstrated as Ismene attempts to share her sister's fate. Yet Antigone

[233] This longing for change characterised Expressionist generation, obsessed by the necessity to eradicate the "old" in favour of the "new". Hasenclever's first works (*Der Sohn*, *Der Retter*) reflect this youthful ardour, whereas *Antigone* already foreshadows a pessimistic outlook; in his maturity, Hasenclever admits that the artist can do little in political life.

dismisses her (λόγοις δ᾽ ἐγὼ φιλοῦσαν οὐ στέργω φίλην, 543) and "she devotes herself exclusively to one *philos*, her 'dearest' Polynices (73, 81)".[234] Moreover, she reveals that she would not have accomplished the same sacrifice for a husband or child, but only for a brother, whose loss is irreplaceable (911-12).

Hasenclever enriches the Greek archaic notion of *philia* towards one's kinsmen and expands Antigone's love towards Polynices in a wider love that includes all humankind. Unlike the classical Antigone, his Antigone is animated by an all-encompassing love that transcends any distinction between enemies and friends, family members or foreigners.[235] Despite the changed meaning, Antigone's defiant words to Creon closely recall the original lines 450-53:

> οὐ γάρ τί μοι Ζεὺς ἦν ὁ κηρύξας τάδε,
> οὐδ᾽ ἡ ξύνοικος τῶν κάτω θεῶν Δίκη
> τοιούσδ᾽ ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ὥρισεν νόμους.
>
> (p. 40) Ich kenne ein Gesetz, noch ungeschrieben.
> Von keinem Herold in die Welt posaunt.
> So alt wie du und ich.
> Es heißt die Liebe.
>
> I know a law, still unwritten,
> Announced in the world by no herald,
> As old as you and me.
> It is called Love.

From Antigone's perspective, justice is not represented by the law of the state (which has proved to be repressive and authoritarian) nor by the law of the gods (which have permitted that all such sufferings could happen). She only has faith in the law of *Liebe*, of love, transformed into a political instrument to convert the people and encourage

[234] Cairns (2016), 95.
[235] Hasenclever was possibly inspired by Romain Rolland's *L'Antigone éternelle* (1915), whose Antigone also "refuses to hate" ("se refuse à la haine") and does not distinguish between "frères ennemis" ("enemy brothers"). See Urdician (2017), 50.

their rebellion against the tyrant. In an encounter between the two lovers, Antigone and Haemon, absent in the original, Antigone explains the meaning of "love". According to her, to love is to help the weak, to fight for the world, but above all, love is the ultimate expression of true humanity (p. 66): "Liebe ist Menschlichkeit".

When she advocates the right to bury her brother in the exchange with Ismene, Hasenclever's Antigone asserts (pp. 19-20):

> Wo steht das, Schwester,
> Dass man die Toten nicht begraben soll?
> *Er ist ein Mensch*. Er ist mein Bruder.
>
> Where is that, sister, (written)
> That the dead should not be buried?
> *He is a man*. He is my brother.[236]

These words do not differ from the original lines 45-6 (τὸν γοῦν ἐμὸν καὶ τὸν σόν … ἀδελφόν). However, Hasenclever's Antigone adds that Polynices is a "man", not only a "brother", thus emphasising the universality of her act that could have been directed to anyone, not only to a member of her family.

Hasenclever's Antigone is thus both "mother" and "sister" (or savior sister, *die rettende Schwester*) of the entire humanity, with whom she shares the sufferings. In her final speech she proclaims (p. 87): "Weil ich lebe und Mutter bin: Sind alle Menschen meine Kinder" ("For I live and I am a mother: all men are my children"), and to Haemon she says (p. 67):

> Dich schützen, dir dauern,
> Deiner Leiden Schwester sein.
>
> Protect you, serve you,
> Be the sister of your sufferings.

[236] Italics mine.

In virtue of such "pacifist" values, Antigone does not condemn her enemies, she is exclusively animated by love and compassion, and strongly believes that all men are capable of mutual love. Even Creon is included in Antigone's category of *philoi* or "brothers". Thus, her specific act of love towards Polynices becomes a pretext, in Hasenclever's version, to express a call for peace and love, which transcends any distinction and extends to the "enemies" (the so-called *Feindesliebe*).[237] This radical message is particularly relevant in the context of the First World War: it reminds Hasenclever's contemporary audience that there is no real distinction between friends and enemies since "all men are brothers" (p. 44: "alle Menschen sind Brüder").[238]

Antigone's voice is thus the voice of humanity and fraternity, in dialectical opposition to the absolute power of the state. All her speeches can be taken as the key to Hasenclever's version of Sophocles' tragedy. The universal and unconditional love that animates the heroine, her will to sacrifice, and her final martyr-like death can be associated with Christian notion of mutual love, *agape* or charity.[239] The term refers to the comprehensive divine-human love, as well as to the pure, ideal, "brotherly" love for one's fellow man. However, throughout the drama Hasenclever also expresses his pessimism towards gods' role in human life. His ambiguous relation to religion and Christianity is reflected in his adaptation of *Antigone*.

7. The Role of God in Hasenclever's *Antigone*

Hasenclever was educated in a Lutheran family; only as he grew up did he begin to question the teachings of orthodox Christianity and denounce their incompatibility with the waging of war, with its slaughter of countless people. His views on religion

[237] The idea that the enemies in the opposing trenches in reality were brothers had been frequently emphasised by Expressionist poets. See for example Hanns Johst's play *Die Stunde der Sterbenden* (1914), Heinrich Lersch's *Brüder* (1915), and Gerrit Engelke's *An die Soldaten des großen Krieges* (1918).

[238] It is plausible that Hasenclever was reminiscent of Friedrich Schiller's famous ode *An die Freude* (1785), which also claims: "Alle *Menschen* werden *Brüder*". I am grateful to Gary Vos for this suggestion.

[239] On the use of the *agape* motif in Hasenclever's early works see Hoelzel (1983), 40-4. On *agape*, see Outka (1972); Jeanrond (2013), 234: "Biblical love involves the acceptance of God's gift of loving relationship and covenant; a willingness to develop faithful and forgiving relations with God, other people, God's creation, and one's own emerging self."

are expressed in his works, including *Nirwana* (1909), *Irrtum und Leidenschaft* (1969), and the poem *Christus*, in *Tod und Auferstehung*.[240] Overall, Expressionist writers expressed a profound disillusion in God's role;[241] yet, despite their critique of institutionalised and dogmatic religion, they still believed in the existence of a transcendental force and occasionally used Christian symbols in their works, as Hasenclever does in his version of *Antigone*. Some of Antigone's words retain religious overtones (p. 60): "Ich will für euch hungern. Ich will für euch bluten"; "I want to starve for you. I want to bleed for you." With religious fervour, she declares (p. 52):

> Ich hülle mich ein in die Trauer von Gottes Wesen.
> Meine Haare, Asche, fallen auf meinen Leib
> Am Grabe der Menschen.
>
> I enclose myself into God's grief.
> My hair, ashes, fall on my body
> By the grave of mankind.

She also exhorts Creon to "crucify her", since she shall arise again and again (p. 88): "Menschen! In tausend Jahren wandle ich unter euch." Hasenclever's Antigone invokes God in her protest (p. 60): "Gott ist uns gnädig"; "God is merciful to us"; (p. 42): "Gott im Himmel lebt"; "God lives in heaven". She mocks Creon by rhetorically asking (p. 38): "Hat Gott dir schon verziehn?"; "has god already forgiven you?" These and other similar expressions are indicative of Antigone's almost Christian religious fervour.

The sense of guilt of the heroine is also compatible with Christianity. Hasenclever's Antigone accuses herself harshly for not having done enough for

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[240] In this untitled poem of *Tod und Auferstehung*, later published in Rubiner's *Kameraden der Menschheit* under the heading *Christus*, Hasenclever criticised organised religion and denounced the indifference of Christ to human suffering. In his maturity, he also satirised institutionalised religion. On Hasenclever's satiric treatment of religion, see Hoelzel (1983), 59-70.

[241] Some Expressionist writers expressed a religious consciousness (even if, rarely, a religious orthodoxy) and concern. See for example Franz Werfel's poem *Jesus und der Äserweg* (1913), Reinard Johannes Sorge's *Sieg des Christos* (1914), and Stefan Zweig's *Jeremias* (1917).

humanity (p. 53) and she feels guilty for having lived in comfort while others suffered.[242] She is publicly criticised for being a princess: a woman from the crowd rhetorically asks her whether she could bake bread with her "delicate hands", or empty pots or beat carpets (pp. 48-9). Hasenclever expands the Sophoclean motif of the derision of Antigone by the Chorus (839).[243] In the original, the heroine feels mocked by the Chorus, who try to give an explanation to Antigone's current situation and compare her to the immortals. In Hasenclever, Antigone's reaction is different: she claims that she is the one in Thebes who has the greatest guilt (p. 53: "Ich habe die meiste Schuld in Theben"). She expresses the will to redeem her guilt by fighting for the unfortunate against the privileged (p. 53): [244]

> Ich klage mich an, die niederste Magd von allen
> Daß ich lebte und wußte: wir töten uns ...
> Ich klage mich an, daß in meine Kissen
> Daß ich schwebte aufblühenden Girlanden,
> Solange ein Mensch noch hungrig war.
>
> I accuse myself, the lowest servant of all
> That I lived and knew that we are killing ourselves …
> I accuse myself, that in my pillows,
> Of blooming garlands I hovered,
> While yet men were hungry.

In Hasenclever's reinterpretation, Antigone accepts her "punishment", by renouncing all violence and choosing self-sacrifice. Towards the end of the play, also Eurydice expresses the desire to renounce her royal status and appears on the stage "in a simple black dress" (p. 106: "im einfachen, schwarzen Kleid").

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[242] In the original, Antigone is aware of her royal status (for example, at line 38) but she does not show the same feeling of guilt and refusal of life's commodities.
[243] See Fornaro (2013), 21-2.
[244] A similar characterisation of the hero recurs in Expressionist works such as Franz Werfel's Hecuba in *Die Troerinnen* (1911), Eustache de Saint Pierre in George Kaiser's *Die Bürger von Calais* (1914), Jeremiah in Stefan Zweig's play (1917), and the figure of Kule in Ernst Barlach's *Der Tote Tag* (1912).

Moreover, Antigone's mission can be accomplished only at the cost of the sacrifice of the individual. Hasenclever's Antigone asserts the necessity to sacrifice herself for humanity (p. 51):

> In meine Arme, die alle Schmerzen gewiegt haben,
> Will ich euch betten zur Ruhe, zur Hilfe.
>
> In my arms, which have endured all the pain,
> I beg you to rest, to help.

In the original, too, the Greek Antigone calls on the people of Thebes to look upon her sufferings (942-43) and shows a constant obsession with her death and sacrifice. For example, in the encounter with Creon, she provokes the king with these words: "What do you want more than to capture and kill me?" (497), which are echoed in Hasenclever's version, in which Antigone encourages Creon to kill her (p. 39): "Du hast gesiegt. Töte mich!"; "You have won. Kill me!" To Ismene, Hasenclever's Antigone says (p. 47): "Du lebst, Ich muss zum Tode gehn"; "You live, I must go to my death", which echoes line 555 of the original. Both heroines express, throughout the play, the will to die. Sophocles' Antigone already knew her destiny of death (559-60). Yet her sacrifice is accomplished in order to fulfil her own desire to lie beside her brother, father, and mother, in virtue of a one-sided *philia* addressed simply to her family members, and in particular to her brother; she does not express any desire to sacrifice herself for the whole people of Thebes as Hasenclever's Antigone. The struggle of Hasenclever's and Sophocles' Antigone is thus different: whereas the Greek heroine fights for the assertions of familial and religious duty, Antigone in Hasenclever is moved by the desire to establish love and peace in every human being through her pious act of humanity.

In Hasenclever's drama, Antigone's sacrificial death can be associated with martyrdom.[245] Before her death, Antigone prays God (p. 87): "Gott Laβ mich am Särge des Bruders Zur Gnade schweben"; "God! Let me float to grace on the coffin of my

[245] See Flashar (2009), 127.

brother". After her death, Ismene addresses the people with the following words (p. 89):

> Bürger von Theben! Antigone ist tot.
> Kommt zum Grabe. Sie starb für euch.
>
> Citizens of Thebes! Antigone is dead.
> Come to the grave. She died for you.

The people claim (p. 90): "Ein Engel hat sie berührt."; "An angel touched her." Antigone's utterances and final death are thus a strong reminder of Christianity's saviour (*Erlöser*). As well as a political leader, she can be seen as a religious leader, a saviour who preaches a "gospel of love" and has a mission to perform: the ethical conversion of man.

Despite the frequent allusions to religion, Hasenclever's Antigone also expresses disillusionment towards religious faith. In the dialogue with her sister Ismene (who asserts that God will revenge their brother), Antigone accuses God of doing nothing to direct the proper course of justice. She refuses to invoke a God who was silent and who permitted death and misery (p. 20):

> Rede nicht von Gott!
> Hat Gott erlaubt, daß sich die Menschen morden?
> Hat Gott, als Kreon sich vermaß,
> Zu treten auf den armen Leib des Toten,
> Erdbeben, Feuerbrände ausgesandt,
> Das Maul des Spötters zu ersticken?
> Gott schwieg.
>
> Do not speak of God!
> Did God allow men to kill each other?
> Did God, as Creon resolved
> To step on the poor body of the dead,

Send fires and earthquakes,
To suffocate the mouth of the mocker?
God was silent.

God did not offer any helping hand nor warning. His voice could not be heard. Whereas Christian love demands an unconditional love towards God, Hasenclever and his heroine repudiate a God that is silent in front of people's suffering and wonder whether such a God is worthy of love. In her speech to the people of Thebes, Hasenclever's Antigone claims that (p. 42): "Gott ist auch mit den Feinden" ("God is also with the enemy"), and no voice from heaven roused her to be a *Retterin*, a saviour (p. 53): "Daß keine Stimme von Gottes Himmel / Mich erweckte als Retterin." In the original, Antigone wavers once, in her last speech (922-23), and complains that the gods have abandoned her, despite her piety. Apart from such temporary doubt, Antigone believes that honouring the law of the gods transcends any other duty. However, in both plays, no divine sign nor help intervenes to save her.

Therefore, through Antigone's speeches, Hasenclever expresses the refusal to proclaim god's love in a world stigmatised by war and destruction. The law of love of Hasenclever's Antigone is ultimately distinct both from an authentic Christian *agape*, since Christian love and martyrdom without authentic faith in god would be impossible, and from Sophoclean *philia*, since the latter is only directed towards *philoi*, friends. Hasenclever expands the motif of *philia*, already present in the Sophoclean original, by adding ethical implications of brotherhood and universality; yet Hasenclever's notion of *philia* is still deprived of an authentic love for a God who kept silent in the dramatic years of First World War, during which he composed his *Antigone*. In these years, characterised by hatred amongst nations, people started to express disillusionment with the role of god and religion. Hasenclever's Antigone calls for love and humanity; not love dictated by a God unconcerned with humans' sufferings but rather love dictated by a universal sense of humanity and peace amongst nations, necessary to avoid wars in the future.

8. Creon and the Tyranny of the State: the Kaiser in Ancient Garments

In Hasenclever's adaptation "love", represented by Antigone, is opposed to "hatred", embodied by Creon. As Antigone adheres to her principle of love, whatever the consequences, so Creon is faithful to the law and power of state. Believing in the state as final authority, the king of Thebes utilises any force in order to defend and maintain that civil power. His violence will only precipitate the destruction of the state, but he does not realise it until it is too late. In his blind fury, he continuously claims the absoluteness of his power; to an Old man who wonders how to distinguish what is right from what is wrong, Creon replies (p. 34):

> Das Recht regiert.
> Und ich entscheide es!
>
> The law rules.
> And I decide the law!

His brutality and autocratic attitude are evident ever since the beginning of the tragedy. When the people of Thebes express discontent and cry out that they want peace, Creon orders the guard to knock-down a young man and to drag him away (p. 30: "Haut ihn mit der Peitsche auf den Schädel!"). Moreover, he punishes the masses by doubling the taxes and ordering the soldiers to charge the crowd. His speech is brutal also towards the guard, as he says (p. 34):

> Mit deiner Zunge Lecke den Staub von der Leiche!
>
> With your tongue, lick the dust from the corpse!

To the people who lament their misery, Hasenclever's Creon responds (p. 28): "Ich brauche euer Geld und eure Söhne. Theben soll mächtig sein!"; "I need your money and your sons. Thebes will be strong!" As the crowd protests against cold and starvation, Creon orders the soldiers to charge the mob and to double the taxes (pp.

110-11); he even threatens to let them starve to death (p. 59): “Ich sperr euch in die Häuser / Und laß euch hungern”; “I will lock you in your houses / And let you die of hunger”.

Behind the aggressive speeches and violent actions of the tyrannical Creon, Wilhelm II, German emperor and King of Prussia, can be easily detected.[246] Like Hasenclever’s Creon, who demands the unconditional obedience and sacrifice of every citizen, the Kaiser showed a tyrannical attitude and an ostentatiously autocratic rule. By offering a caricature of the Kaiser under the “portrait mask” of the Sophoclean Creon, Hasencelver presented his politics in clear and rather unsubtle terms.

Especially during the first months of the war, Wilhelm II frequently appealed in person to the patriotism of his people, publicly proclaimed his absolute power, and threatened to “smash” all opposition to his will. For example, in reference to the conservative nobility, he said: “If the dogs dare to turn against me, on whatever issue, in an open, systematic, and dangerous way, then several heads will roll. For this is high treason.”[247] He alone was the master of the Reich, he said in a speech of May 1891, and he would tolerate no others.[248] Likewise, in a speech of 1892, the German Kaiser proclaimed: “My course is the right one, and in it I shall continue to steer. We are destined for greatness, and I shall lead you to glorious days”.[249] His speeches testify to his claim to autocracy and his absolutist ambitions, as reflected in Creon’s addresses to the people of Thebes. For example, in Hasenclever’s version, Creon proudly asserts (p. 27): “Nur der Starke wird die Welt erobern”; “Only the strong will conquer the world”; (p. 30): “Wer gegen mich ist, den zertrete ich.”; “Everyone who opposes me, I shall crush.” Like the Kaiser, Creon emphasises that it is his right to decide the law, against anyone else (p. 30): “Die Ordnung dieser Stadt ist unverrückbar”; “The order of the city is unmovable”.

The Kaiser also appealed to God and divine help, which would allow the Germans to win the war, and considered himself as the intermediary between God and

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[246] Kaiser Wilhelm II was born on 27 January 1859 in Berlin and died on 4 June 1941, at the age of eighty-two, in exile in the Netherlands. He ruled the German Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia from 1888 to 1918. On Wilhelm II’s life, politics and self-display, see Röhl (1982; 1993; 2014); Deist (1982); Cecil (1996); Mombauer and Deist (2003).
[247] Eulenberg to Bülow, 26 July 1900, quoted in Röhl (1982), 32.
[248] Speech at Düsseldorf, 4 May 1891. See Penzler (1912), 176.
[249] Speech of 24 February 1892; see Obst (2011), no. 49; see also Elkind (1904), 292-94.

the people.[250] Likewise, Hasenclever's Creon retains a political as well as a religious authority (p. 27): "Gott, der die Feinde schlug, hat mich / Zum König eingesetzt"; "God, who struck the enemies, made me king". He considers himself responsible directly to God (p. 30):

> Gott gab mir Majestät,
> Daß ich euch würdig führe
> Ihm allein schuld ich Rechenschaft.
>
> God gave me majesty,
> So that I can lead you worthy
> I account guilt to him alone.

In the original, too, Creon invokes Zeus in his opening speech (162; 184) and claims the need for strong leadership and authoritarian rule (173-74). Yet the tyrannical attitude and reactions of Hasenclever's Creon are more violent and dehumanised than in Sophocles' play, and preclude any possible sympathetic response. Hasenclever expands the already negative depiction of the authoritarian ruler of Sophocles' play to an extreme degree. Sophocles' Creon seeks, after all, to be a good ruler for his city and only progressively does he degenerate into an autocratic tyrant, as both Antigone (506-7) and Haemon acknowledge (736). Hasenclever's Creon arrogates to himself the arbitrary right to rule and is solely concerned with his own individual interests as ruler. He is addressed by his own people as "murderer" and "King of corpses" (p. 93). Blinded by his own hate and will to power, Hasenclever's Creon is the ultimate responsible of the tragedy. At the end, he instructs the Captain to set fire to the city when he gives the signal.[251]

Through such a completely negative representation of the "Imperial monarch", Hasenclever expresses his critique of an Imperial dictatorship in the age of Wilhelm II in Germany and Tsar Nicholas II in Russia. The play raises questions about the

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[250] On Wilhelm's monarchical principle of divine right, see Röhl (2014), 41-3.
[251] Similarly, in Brecht's 1948 version, Creon is depicted as Nazi dictator who, at the end of the play, as Thebes is losing ground to Argos, insists that he would rather see the city destroyed than surrender. See section 3.4.1.

legitimacy of such autocratic and personal rule, the absurd and anachronistic pretention of divine right, and the dictators' responsibility in the course of the "tragedy" of the Great War. Hasenclever's tragedy ends as Creon renounces his rule, as the Kaiser did in 1918. Creon also admits his guilt and discovers his humanity – as Hasenclever was hoping of the German Emperor. At the end, Creon recognises the fundamental depravity of human society, as he confesses (p. 111):

> Der Mensch
> Folgt seiner wilden Mordgier wie das Vieh. …
> Klagt mich an.
>
> The human being
> Follows his own brutal murder as cattle. …
> I accuse myself.

9. The Final Catastrophe: the Struggle Towards an Impossible Faith

In the original play, through the intervention of the divine powers in the person of Tiresias, Creon learns his fatal mistake. In Hasenclever, he is converted by an apocalyptic and supernatural vision of the masses, a recurrent feature of Expressionism.[252] The stage is presented in this way (p. 80):

> Die Arena wird plötzlich hell. Haufen von Toten. Blutende mit offenen Wunden. Frauen, Männer mit Messern in der Brust. Wahnsinnige blöken. Zerfetzte Gliedmaßen. Kinder stolpern zwischen den Leichen.
>
> The arena is suddenly bright. Heap of dead. Bleeding people with open wounds. Women, men with knives in the chest. Maniacs braying. Torn limbs. Children stumble between corpses.

[252] Samuel and Hinton (1939), 89.

The mob appears on the stage in a climax of grief and agony: a girl, an old man, a half-clothed man, a burnt man, an old woman, a mother, a blind man, all of them war victims confused in a collective voice of misery and protest (pp. 103-4):

> DAS MÄDCHEN:
> Wo ist mein Vater!?
> EIN ALTER MANN:
> Mein Haus ist Asche. Mein Brot ist verbrannt. Wo soll ich wohnen! Was soll ich essen? Ich bin siebzig Jahre alt.
> EIN HALBBEKLEIDETER:
> Gebt mir ein Hemb! Ich bin nackt. Mein Blöße! Ich friere …
> EINE MUTTER:
> Königin! Hier ist das Bein meines Kindes. Es lag in der Küche im Brand.
>
> A GIRL:
> Where is my father?
> AN OLD MAN:
> My house in ashes. My bread burnt. Where am I to live! What am I to eat! I am seventy years old.
> A HALF-NACKED MAN:
> Give me a shirt! I am naked. My nakedness! I freeze …
> A MOTHER:
> Queen! Here is my child's leg. It was lying in the flames in the kitchen.

In this terrifying scene, which increases the mournful and dark atmosphere of the play, Hasenclever emphasises the suffering of common people. A burnt body appears, the product of the fire which has burnt down the city. The people's grief quickly turns into violence and the popular rebellion is no less violent than tyrannical repression. Hatred and exaltation take hold of the crowd as everyone claims (p. 114):

> STIMME:
> Der König ist fort!

ZWEITE STIMME:
Wir haben keinen König mehr!
DRITTE STIMME:
Wir sind frei!

VOICE:
The king is gone!
SECOND VOICE:
We have no king anymore!
THIRD VOICE:
We are free!

Hasenclever represents the effects of an authoritative government and the consequent social disintegration. Once again, the violent outbreak and sudden reaction of the masses testify to the aggressive impulses and frenetic energy typical of the mob. The German people, too, at the end of the war, desired to punish the Kaiser for the war, "on the assumption that, as the highest-ranking person in charge of German policy, he was partly to blame for the war, and responsible for its bloody course".[253]

At the end of the play, Creon gives the order to set the city on fire, people remonstrate, and total anarchy is avoided only thanks to a *deus ex machina*, a voice from the grave (p. 115):

Volk,
Falle nieder –
Gott hat gerichtet.

People,
Fall down –
God has judged.

[253] Afflerbach (2003), 195.

It is Antigone's voice which, even after her death, recalls for conciliation and moral responsibility. God appears in these final lines, leaving open the possibility of a redemption. The heroine believes that her deed will survive her death (p. 43): "Ich sterbe nicht! Der Glaube meiner Toten überlebt mich."; "I do not die! The faith of my deed survives."

However, events spin out of control at the end of the play and, once again, violence triumphs. The final chaos shows that the masses are unable to achieve a constructive political action and prophetically envisages the defeat of humanity. Antigone's *Liebe* does not change the reality and it seems likely that wars and destruction will never cease, in a bloody sequence reiterated year after year, as the tale of the *Rabenkönig* testifies.[254] According to this tale, recounted by a "voice" coming from the mob in the very first act of Hasenclever's play, every ten years a "Raven King" is elected, who soon forces his people to fight in the "Raven battle". Then (p. 26):

> Wenn die Raben getötet sind, bereiten sie dem König ein Mahl. Wenn der König die Raben gefressen hat, muß er zehn Jahre verdauen; dann fängt die Geschichte von vorne an.
>
> When the ravens are killed, they prepare a meal for the king. When the king has eaten the ravens, he must digest for ten years; then the story begins from the beginning.

This tale exemplifies Hasenclever's belief that man's nature contains an irrational and destructive potential and cannot be persuaded to goodness and reason. In his drama, Hasenclever shows the failure of rational communication of social aims between people and the unbridgeable gap between revolutionary dream and reality. Antigone,

[254] The term is a deviation from the German *Rabenmutter*, which refers to a cruel mother neglecting her children; Elwood (1972), 52. Significantly, later in the play (p. 81), Creon is addressed by the people as *Rabenkönig*.

who follows her destiny of death, embodies the resignation of those Expressionists who recognised the failure of their generation.[255]

Hasenclever is thus exemplary of the ambiguous feeling which took hold of his generation, expressed by Expressionist writers and artists in their works: utopian faith in human rationality on the one hand, and bitter disillusionment regarding its successful application on the other. Like Sophocles' original, Hasenclever's adaptation is a philosophical reflection on the contradictions of humanity, on its weakness and greatness. In the former, the gods legitimise Antigone's act and the Chorus teach that man can still learn something in old age; in the latter, gods are absent and the masses relapse into the same mistakes, without learning anything from Antigone's example. Through their voices, Hasenclever is able to represent powerfully the horrors of the war and to express his pessimism about popular rule and the maintenance of peace. In Hasenclever's pessimistic view, man is responsible for his own fate, simply determined by his actions and their dreadful consequences. His destruction is not caused by the gods, by hereditary guilt or by an external fate. God does not desire violence or war. Man alone is responsible for the bloody course of events. This teaching is directly addressed to Hasenclever's contemporary audience, fully aware of the disastrous consequences of human action and hatred which led to the First World War.

Hasenclever's choice of adapting *Antigone* in these crucial years is thus determined by the hope to speak to his audience through the ancient play. With Hasenclever, Sophocles' *Antigone* begins to be established as a "canonical" drama of political and pacifist resistance. This version is as important as the original for the creation of later, politicised *Antigones* that followed and reacted to the First and Second World Wars. The divergences from the original take an explicit political impulse and reinforce the continuing power of the original, proving its political potential in a crucial historical moment.

[255] Hasenclever's disillusionment is clearly expressed in two works, *Die Entsheidung* (1919) and *Die Pest* (1920). Here Hasenclever criticised those revolutionaries who, emerging as the political victors after the war, betrayed the ideals of *Geist* and ethical justice.

3.2. The Inter-War Period

In this section of my thesis, I shall focus on a selection of European adaptations written in the inter-war period, which I believe to be particularly significant in the process that has led to the establishment of a politicised *Antigone*. Before Anouilh's and Brecht's iconic versions, a democratic and libertarian Antigone was portrayed by Jean Cocteau (1922) and António Sérgio de Sousa (1930). Almost contemporary was the *Antigone* by Arthur Honegger (1927), who had composed the music for Cocteau's adaptation and used his abridged text for his own opera. These authors displayed different and highly personalised approaches to the original, reinterpreted in opposite ways and transformed into something new. In my analysis, I shall give particular attention to the political aspects of these versions, focusing on how both the authors' own agenda and the historical context helped to shape the characteristics of the twentieth-century model of an *Antigone* of political resistance.

3.2.1. Jean Cocteau's *Antigone*

1. Introduction

An influential and distinctive case in the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* is Jean Cocteau's adaptation. It was produced at the Atelier Theatre in Paris on 20 December 1922, with costumes by Coco Chanel, sets by Picasso, and music by Arthur Honegger.[256] The preface to the play summarises Cocteau's method in approaching the ancient text, which is described as an aerial view of Greece:

> C'est tentant de photographier la Grèce en aéroplane. On lui découvre un aspect tout neuf. Ainsi j'ai voulu traduire *Antigone*. À vol d'oiseau de grandes beautés disparaissent, d'autres surgissent; il se forme des rapprochements, des blocs, des ombres, des angles, des reliefs inattendus.

[256] It was published in the *Feuilles Libres* 31, March-April 1923. On Honegger's own version of *Antigone* (1927), with scenery by Cocteau, see section 3.2.2. of this thesis.

> Peut-être mon expérience est-elle un moyen de faire vivre les vieux chefs-d'œuvre. A force d'y habiter nous les contemplons distraitement, mais parce que je survole un texte célèbre, chacun croit l'entendre pour la première fois.
>
> It is tempting to photograph Greece from a plane. It is possible to discover a completely new aspect. In this way, I wanted to translate *Antigone*. From a bird's eye distance, great beauties disappear, others arise; there are shapes, blocks, shadows, angles, unexpected reliefs.
> Perhaps my experience is in itself a way of bringing old masterpieces back to life. Being used to them, we contemplate them distractedly, but because I am flying over a well-known text, everyone would think they are hearing it for the first time.[257]

In his short preface to the play, Cocteau makes immediately clear that he has modernised and uncovered new aspects of the ancient play, enabling the audience to experience the well-known text anew, as if for the first time. The image of the aeroplane recalls the movements of a camera and contemporary cinematographic techniques. It also suggests a concern with speed and with the overall picture rather than with focused details, thus implying a departure from literal, accurate translation. Cocteau's *Antigone* is indeed a script of "condensation" and "contraction", characterised by brevity, economy, and synthesis.[258] It is concentrated into three acts and is considerably shortened, leaving out about half of the text. The greatest cuts are the choruses, which are spoken by a single voice coming from an opening in the middle of the stage.[259] Cocteau himself read the lines of the choruses "very fast and loud", as if he was reading "a newspaper article".[260] The dialogue is sharp, direct, and rapid in its pace, often cutting directly to the point; the style is colloquial and concise, stripped

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[257] Cocteau (1948a), *Preface*, 9. Page numbers refer to the Gallimard edition of Jean Cocteau's *Antigone*. English translations are mine.
[258] In the stage directions prefaced to the play, Cocteau (1948), 12, speaks of the "extreme rapidity" of the play and remarks that the speed does not prevent the characters from speaking much and moving little ("l'extrême vitesse de l'action n'empêche pas les acteurs d'articuler beaucoup et de remuer peu"). The rapid pace and delivery therefore contrast with the statue-like stance of the protagonists.
[259] Cocteau (2003), 29.
[260] Sprigge and Kihm (1968), 86.

of any poetic adornment. In what remains of the play (less than twenty pages),[261] Cocteau preserves the essence of the Greek tragedy and follows Sophocles' *Antigone* closely, often speech by speech. According to Cocteau, also the speed is an intrinsic element of the original text and is the essence of the "tragic".[262] Through the powerful compression of the story, Cocteau reproduces the tragic idea of the inevitability of fate, which collides in the modern version with the notion of theatrical determinism. Cocteau presents the action as already decided, mechanically imposed upon the characters hurrying towards their inevitable destiny.

Moreover, Cocteau modernises the language of the play and gives his characters a subversive, colloquial language, which contrasts with the solemnity and gravity of tragedy. He introduces words such as "anarchist" – an apparently political word which emphasises the author's aesthetic (rather than political) rebelliousness. The reduction of the play to its bare essentials, along with the use of contemporary language, enables Cocteau to desacralise the grandeur of tragedy and to break with conventions and academic rules. The result is a remarkably abridged version in which Cocteau reconfigures the traditional motifs of Sophocles' *Antigone* and gives them original and personal meanings.

In this chapter, I shall discuss briefly the historical and political background that affected Cocteau's work. In particular, the period that followed the First World War, which was characterised by rebelliousness and the desire to break with the tradition, prompted and enriched Cocteau's approach to the Classics and to Sophocles' *Antigone*. This analysis is followed by an examination of the text in close comparison with the original that inspired it, drawing attention to what Cocteau has kept, and why, as opposed to what he has discarded. Particular attention is given to the speed of his adaptation, which reveals the author's attempt to modernise the play whilst reproducing its tragic fatality and engaging with its complex moral issues.

Building on the recent scholarship on Cocteau and taking the text as main reference point,[263] I shall give my own new, detailed, and nuanced analysis of

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[261] Kirkland (2010), 316, observes that "the whole play can be put on in nearly thirty minutes."
[262] Cocteau (1979), 93. On the intrinsic speed of the *Antigone*, see Kirkland (2010), 320-22.
[263] See especially Fulcher (2006), 658-61; Fialho (2017). Steiner (1984), 169, only mentions the play briefly. An illuminating article on Cocteau's version is Kirkland (2010), which focuses on the speed of his adaptation.

Cocteau's *Antigone* as part of my study of the play's reception and politicisation in the twentieth century. It will be evident from my analysis that Cocteau, through subtle additions and striking reductions, has created a new Antigone, a "free, fierce, virgin" young woman that mirrors the courage of women such as Jeanne d'Arc and Charlotte Corday as well as an "anarchist" who, like Cocteau himself, rebels against established laws and conventions.[264] The ancient tragedy allows Cocteau to voice his own libertarian, personal, and "aesthetic" rebellion, as well as his non-conformity to the current interpretative model of a political *Antigone*. Cocteau's version thus represents a paradigmatic attempt at modernisation and historicising of the Sophoclean original.

2. Jean Cocteau and the "Theatre of Paris"

Cocteau's work in the theatre dates to the period after the war. In the immediate post-war years, France was disoriented and disillusioned. In the climate of rebellion against the war, viewed as a pointless and horrendous slaughter, the younger generation of intellectuals responded with "creative euphoria", in a constant search for new artistic forms.[265] Artistic movements such as Dadaism and Surrealism flourished in Paris after the Armistice in reaction to the recent hardships of the war and early post-war years, which provoked "the flight from the real", into the more comforting world of imagination and the unconscious.[266]

If artists invoked a reaction against tradition and classicism, emphasising their modernity and experimentalism in breaking with the preceding century, the earlier classicising tradition of the Parnassiens continued to lurk behind some adaptations

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[264] Cocteau (2003), 29, compares Antigone's revolt to the rebellion of Jeanne d'Arc. *Antigone* had been often associated with the heroism of Jeanne d'Arc; see Fraisse (1966), 265-68. Charlotte Corday was a figure of the French Revolution executed by guillotine in 1793 for the assassination of Jacobin leader Jean-Paul Marat. Cocteau (1948b), 35, compares Charlotte Corday's lack of regret for what she has done with Antigone's determination and defiant spirit.

[265] See Fialho (2017), 57-8.

[266] The Surrealists, whose Manifesto was inaugurated by André Breton in 1924, were especially responsive to a political dimension and emphasised the absurdity and incongruity of life. Cocteau was attracted by the ideas of Surrealism and Dadaism. He wrote a futurist work, *Le Cap de Bonne Espérance*, inspired by the encounter with the aviator Roland Garros. He was also fascinated by the Cubist movement and interacted with Cubist painters such as Pablo Picasso, who worked at the setting of his *Antigone*. On Dadaism and Futurism see Eburne (2015). On aspects of surrealism in the works of Cocteau see Cook (1987).

performed in the inter-war period.[267] An example is the *Antigone* translated almost literally by Paul Meurice and Auguste Vaquérie, which was produced at the Odéon in Paris in 1844 and was revived in 1918. The play had been earlier staged at Orange and its controversial translation was used for the Mendelssohn *Antigone* in Paris (1843).[268]

The appropriation of the Classical heritage in the inter-war period can be explained as a reaction against "the narrowness of German nationalism" and an assimilation of the Classical past with "cosmopolitanism" and positive values.[269] This classicising trend extended to the French republicans as much as to the far right (*l'Action Française*), even though with divergent approaches. A return to the Classics did not only allow playwrights to address sensitive political issues by means of mythical subject matters; it also afforded the opportunity to replicate *le grand siècle* and the seventeenth-century classicising tradition. The educational reforms of 1923 also played a significant role in determining a return to the Classics in this period: Greek and Latin were made compulsory in the attempt to give the humanities equal weight as sciences within secondary schools.[270]

Therefore, the post-War calssicising impulse in France must be seen against the background of the wider rejection of German nationalism, the return to the neo-classical tradition and the appropriations of the Classics by the far right, as well as the early twentieth-century educational reforms. It is impossible to explain the proliferation of rewritings of classical myths in this period without considering these intellectual and cultural trends, which also contributed to establish the popularity of *Antigone* and its subsequent politicisation.

If Sophocles' Oedipus was especially popular in France during the 1920s and 1930s,[271] Antigone's adolescent disobedience to establishment (Creon's law) was also an attractive theme for French artists. Sophocles' *Antigone* began to assume a new, political resonance. Her deeds and disobedience were transformed into a

[267] The Parnassiens of the 1890s invoked a return to ancient Greek past and its beauty with attention to form and historical accuracy. See Macintosh (2009a), 160-61.
[268] See Flashar (2009), 83-6.
[269] Macintosh (2009a), 164.
[270] Macintosh (2009a), 162-64.
[271] *Oedipus Tyrannus* was staged six times; see Macintosh (2009a), 158.

"revendication anarchiste".[272] Antigone's voice of revolt and her death were associated with the rebellion of the Jacobins or the execution of Charlotte Corday. The popularity of *Antigone* in these years is proved by the publication of three patriotic and political *Antigones* by Alfred Poizat (1920), Jean Réboul (published in 1921 but written in 1844), and Louis Perroy (1922), as well as three French translations of *Antigone* by l'abbé Bousquet (1901), Dr. H. Mireur (1912), and Eugène Crespel (1919).[273] Cocteau's 1912 collection of poems, *La Danse de Sophocle*,[274] testifies to an early interest in Sophocles in the young author. Cocteau's attendance at a production of *Oedipe Roi* by Jean Mounet-Sully can explain his fascination with Sophocles,[275] probably enhanced by his classical education at the Condorcet grammar-school. It is thus possible that Cocteau "even consulted the original Greek text" of *Antigone*.[276]

Despite the political relevance of the play in this period, Cocteau wanted to avoid "a facile appropriation of his drama as a plea for authority and patriotism".[277] He attempted to create something unconventional and innovative by modernising the play and emphasising his own rebellious opposition to the tradition. Rather than in the political aspects, Cocteau was interested in originality and speed, which he expressed through the language, setting, costumes, and scenography. In an interview reported in the *Oeuvre* (11 October 1938), Cocteau revealed that he put on *Antigone* "for the sake of the setting, for the pictorial framework ... for the sake of actors … The theatre must be more real than reality, more real than life".[278] Dullin, who played the role of Creon, claimed that "Sophocles was only a pretext" for Cocteau's *mise-en-scène*.[279] In a letter to Jacques Maritain, Cocteau acknowledged his lack of interest in politics: "moi ... je ne me mêle d'aucune politique et ... ne consulte pas le journal".[280] Most of Cocteau's

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[272] Fraisse (1966), 271. Before the twentieth century, the dominant interpretation of *Antigone* was Christian and romantic. On the "French genealogy" of *Antigone*, see Fraisse (1966); Fraisse (1974); Urdician (2017).
[273] Dawe (2013), 269-70.
[274] It was named after the legend which suggested that the young Sophocles danced naked around a monument for the Greek victory at Salamis.
[275] See Macintosh (2009b), ch. 5.
[276] Fulcher (2006), 658.
[277] Fulcher (2006), 659.
[278] Cocteau quoted in Knowles (1967), 58.
[279] Dullin (1969), 276-77, quoted in Steegmuller (1970), 298.
[280] Cocteau (1984), 51.

biographers do not mention any political commitment on the part of the author, who was all too absorbed in his intellectual Parisian life, circles, theatres, and Salons.[281] In another letter to Jacques Maritain, Cocteau revealed the "secret reason" that led him to adapt *Antigone* to the modern stage:

> L'instinct me pousse toujours contre la loi. C'est la raison secrète pour laquelle j'ai traduit *Antigone*.
>
> Instinct always drives me against the law. That is the secret impulse behind my translation of *Antigone.*[282]

The spirit of rebellion expressed in this letter characterised French youth after the war.[283] Living the trauma of post-war experience and the complex experimentalism undertaken by theatre in this period, Cocteau found in Antigone the symbol of freedom and rebellion against established authority and the constraints of society. In the same letter, Cocteau wrote:

> Je dois … saluer, sous sa forme la moins haute, une force imprévue opposée à Créon, au mécanisme prévu de la loi.
>
> I must … greet, in its least elevated form, an unforeseen force opposed to Creon, to the mechanism required by the law.[284]

Antigone allowed Cocteau to express his rebellion against established law and conventional ways of doing theatre, and to bring forth new and innovative aspects, resisting the "aesthetic dictatorship of some of his contemporary groups" – such as Dadaism and Surrealism.[285] In his constant search for new aesthetic forms, Cocteau

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[281] For example, Touzot (1989), 108-9, wonders whether a political awareness "même sourde, même étouffée" has ever touched this *enfant du siècle*.
[282] Lettre à Jacques Maritain (1926), 45; translated by Dawe (2013), 270.
[283] Like Hasenclever, who wrote a drama entitled *Der Sohn*, in which the "son" kills his father, Cocteau wrote the *Enfants terribles* (1929) and *Parents terribles* (1938).
[284] Cocteau (1984), 51. Translation mine.
[285] See Fialho (2017), 69.

opposed the dominant interpretation of *Antigone* as a plea for political resistance and created an apolitical and abridged version. Rather than emphasising the political opposition against oppression and tyranny highlighted by previous authors, which responded to different historical circumstances (the upheavals of the First World War), he highlighted a different kind of artistic rebelliousness. He showed a new way of handling the Classics, a method that consisted of "cutting and tightening the skin of the old masterpieces, restoring them to the new rhythm of our capitals" ("couper et retendre la peau des vieux chefs d'œuvre, à les remettre au rythme nouveau de nos capitales").[286] Thus, Cocteau attempted to revitalise and transform *Antigone* into a modernised "pièce de guerre civile", relevant for his contemporary society.[287]

3. Jean Cocteau and the "Theatre of Sophocles"

Antigone is the first of a series of plays by Cocteau inspired by ancient Greek myths.[288] He produced *Orpheus* (1926), the libretto of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* (1927), and *La Machine infernale*, an adaptation of the Oedipus myth (1939).[289] He created a "modern, or neo, classicism",[290] a new style in French theatre – polemically referred to as *Oedipémie* by André Gide.[291]

Cocteau revealed that the idea of adapting *Antigone* occurred to him when he received a visit from his friend Philippe Legrand, who brought him a Greek shepherd's crook from his trip to Greece.[292] Whether or not this was the real reason, the choice of

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[286] Cocteau (1977), 251. Translation mine.
[287] Barrès (1967), 210, quoted in the preface of Cocteau's play.
[288] Cocteau was a prolific and eclectic artist. He was also a poet, novelist, dramatist, director, actor, cineaste, portraitist, and illustrator. After creating a number of ballets, in the late 1920s and 1930s, he wrote different adaptations: *Antigone*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Orpheus*, *The Infernal Machine*, and *Oedipus Rex*, libretto for Stravinsky. On his life and work, see Grossvogel (1958); Steegmuller (1970), (1973); Touzot (1989), which includes a series of letters, interviews, and articles; Arnaud (2003); Steinegger (2005).
[289] *La Machine infernale* (1939) is Cocteau's second attempt to rework the Oedipus myths. On Cocteau and the Oedipus myth see Martin (1972). *Orphée* opened in Paris at the Théâtre des Arts on 17 June 1926. Other "classical" works by Cocteau include *La Patience de Pénélope* (1910), a humorous reworking of the Greek myth, and the later poetry *Mythologie* (1934).
[290] Fulcher (2006), 658.
[291] Knapp (1985), 115.
[292] Cocteau (2003), 28-9: "Il [Philippe Legrand] m'offrit cette canne et … elle me suggéra de recoudre la peau de la vieille tragédie grecque et de la mettre au rythme de la nôtre époque." See Brown (1968), 257; Dawe (2013), 269.

Antigone was also prompted by seeing what he considered an "incredibly boring" production of the play at the Comédie Française, with music by Camille Saint-Saëns and text by Paul Meurice and Auguste Vacquerie.[293] This *Antigone* had premiered at the Théâtre-Français in Paris on 21 November 1893 and was then performed *en plein air* at the ancient theatre of Orange in 1894. In the musical score, Saint-Saëns tried to restore the sounds of ancient Greek music as accurately as possible, drawing on Gevaert's *Histoire et théorie de la musique de l'antiquité* (1875), cited in the preface. The orchestra consisted of four flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, harp and strings, as well as choruses that sung in unison.[294]

By contrast with Saint-Saëns' classical play, Cocteau introduced innovative and anti-classical elements in his play, evident in the stage, music, and costumes. Cocteau explains in his *Cahiers* that he asked Coco Chanel to design the costumes, because he could not imagine "the daughters of Oedipus badly dressed".[295] This assertion emphasises the author's frivolous manner, his interest in aesthetic and sophistication rather than in historical accuracy. Cocteau was one of the first to recognise Chanel's innovative designs for theatre costume. The costumes were plain, simple cut coarse woollens and jerseys in brown and beige with notes of brick red.[296]

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[293] Cocteau (1950), ix, 320, quoted and translated by Steegmuller (1970), 292-93. See also Fulcher (2006), 658. On this production, see Fraisse (1966), 268-69. The spread of neoclassicism in the artistic domain and the return to the classical past in this period had occurred in painting (Picasso's "retour à Ingres") and in music (Stravinsky's "retour à Bach"); see Le Ber (2002), 56.

[294] In the Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn's Potsdam production of *Antigone* (1841), too, the Chorus' songs followed the original metre. See section 2.2.3. of this thesis.

[295] Cocteau (1985), 93. Gabrielle Chanel was closely involved with Jean Cocteau for over forty years. *Antigone* was her first venture in theatrical costuming. On Cocteau and Chanel, see Peters (1987), 55-7. Smith (2015), 192, observes that "Vogue featured it [*Antigone*] for the clothes, commenting that Chanel's creations resembled 'antique garments discovered after centuries'". See further reviews in Steegmuller (1970), 297; (1972); Davis (2006), 195-96.

[296] Whereas Ismene simply wore a "petite robe de n'importe quel jour", Antigone's dress was made of "laines écossaises". See Cocteau (1985), 94; Cocteau (2003), 29. See illustration 4.

Fig. 4. Photograph of Genica Atanasiou interpreting Antigone costumed by Coco Chanel. Davis (2006), 196.

The scenery, designed and painted by Picasso ("Picasso tira de son génie quelques colonnes de fusain et des sanguine"),[297] was a simple violet-blue backdrop with white Doric columns in the middle. The columns were surrounded by sketches of the men, women and children of the Chorus, inspired by images on Greek vases. Rather than restoring the antique setting and decors, such scenery achieved a distancing and alienating effect.

In Cocteau's *Antigone*, the remarkably original and modernist presentation contrasted with the classical use of masks. In the revival of 1927, Cocteau's actors wore transparent masks similar to "fencing masks" ("du genre des masques d'escrime") and white costumes, draped over black tights, which evoked mere "insects" ("une famille d'insectes").[298] The cast of the play included famous actors such as Charles Dullin, who played Creon, and Antonin Artaud in the role of Tiresias. Antigone was Genica Atanasiou, a young Romanian dancer who spoke little French and whom

[297] Cocteau (2003), 29.
[298] Cocteau (1948), 9, stage directions in the preface.

Cocteau taught to enunciate each syllable.[299] The same effect of estrangement and alienation, evident in the staging, costumes, and acting, would be employed, years later, by Anouilh and Brecht in their own adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

4. The "extreme vitesse" of the Play

The extremely concise action and fast-paced dialogues of Cocteau's version brought some critics to believe that this entailed "little effort" on Cocteau's part beyond retelling the tale in few words.[300] Flashar speaks of the "anatomic reduction" (*anatomischer Reduktion*) of Cocteau's *Antigone*, which does not deal with contemporary political issues but it allows "the bare bones of poetry" (*das Knochengerüst der Dichtung*) to emerge in its "concentrated monumentality" (*in konzentrierter Monumentalität*).[301] The complex choral odes, greatly reduced, do not leave room for serious and substantial meditation. The long reflection on man by the original Chorus in the first *stasimon* (332-75) is conspicuously reduced in the modern play (p. 23), thus leaving the spectator with a sense of fragmentary irresolution and uneasiness.[302] The rapidity of action is indeed a very innovative and fundamental element of Cocteau's remaking of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Cocteau shows a new way of approaching the classical past and transforms ancient tragedy into a modern and lively experience: for Cocteau, theatre itself was "life intensified and concentrated".[303]

Significantly, the age in which Cocteau was living was dominated by industry, speed, and motion. The access to new speed, due to the invention of new machines (high speed trains, aircrafts, and cars), was one of the greatest innovations of the twentieth century.[304] The rise of technology, speed, and the ideal of concision and simplification, reflected in the Cubist movement in painting, were appropriated by Cocteau and expressed in the poetics and aesthetics of his works – including

[299] See Sprigge and Kihm (1968), 87; Cocteau (2003), 29, speaks of the actress as a "danseuse qui parlait à peine notre langue".
[300] Grossvogel (1958), 53.
[301] See Flashar (2009), 143.
[302] Or what Fulcher (2006), 660, defines "a destabilizing sense of fragmentation".
[303] Cocteau quoted in Knowles (1967), 58.
[304] On speed and modernism, see Danius (2002); Duffy (2009).

Antigone.[305] However, Fowlie's observation that Cocteau gives *Antigone* "a new swiftness, a tempo more in keeping with the jumbled precipitation of the twentieth century" is questionable.[306] Whereas Fowlie seems to imply that Cocteau has anachronistically added the twentieth-century "swiftness" upon the original, according to Cocteau the concentration of action is already present in Sophocles' play. However, because the speed of the ancient tragedy is different from the speed of his age, Cocteau declares that he has cut, reduced, and removed superfluous elements (*je déblaye, je concentre et j'ôte*):[307]

> La vitesse qui étonne et qu'on m'impute se trouve dans Sophocle, mais se trouve dans Sophocle, mais notre vitesse n'est pas la vitesse de jadis. Ce qui semblait court à une époque attentive et calme paraît interminable à notre trépidation.
>
> The speed that astonishes and that it is ascribed to me is in Sophocles, but our speed is not the speed of his time. What seemed short to an attentive and calm epoch, seems endless to our trepidation.[308]

Therefore, the speed (*vitesse*) of Cocteau's *Antigone* does not only mirror the rapidity of the modern age, but it is – according to the author – a relatively faithful element to the original and an intrinsic element of the tragic. The hurry and speed of human actions is what often leads man, incapable of understanding his own actions and their outcome, to his ruin. Cocteau describes the *Antigone* as "an express train rushing towards its final derailment" ("un express qui se hâte vers le déraillement final"),[309] so that "speed is somehow the tragic itself".[310]

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[305] On the relationship between "speed", "concision", and Cubism, see Kautz (1970), 46. The artistic movement of Futurism, too, had emphasised speed, industry, new technology, and celebrated machinery, car, and aeroplane. The same method of contraction was applied by Cocteau also in *Romeo and Juliet* (1924) and *Oedipus Rex* (1927).
[306] Fowlie (1966), 59.
[307] Cocteau (1979), 93.
[308] Cocteau (1979), 93, originally in an article published in 1923 on the *Gazette des Sept Arts*. Translation mine.
[309] Cocteau quoted in Davis (2006), 196.
[310] Kirkland (2010), 317. Cocteau also compares speed to a fan, moving so quickly that its speed becomes invisible: "Moi je rêvais un ventilateur dépassant la vitesse admise. Une vitesse sur place qui

In both Sophocles and Cocteau, Antigone and Creon pursue their aims and take their decisions without hesitations, hurrying towards their tragic fate. The entire play is accelerated towards the accomplishment of the catastrophe. Sophocles' Antigone has no doubt that she is right in performing the burial and is aware of the inevitable consequences of her action. She does not expect anything but her inevitable death and precipitously takes action.[311] In the opening scene, which sees the *stichomythia* between Antigone and her sister, Ismene attempts to dissuade Antigone. However, the heroine has already taken her decision and accepted its consequences. The *stichomythia* and its alternation of single lines of verse especially increase the rapidity of action of the original. Cocteau reproduces this dialogue almost line by line, although he sometimes reduces the original. For example, Ismene asks her sister "Mais que puis-je?" (p. 14, "But what can I do?"), which summarises the more descriptive lines of the Greek (39-40):

> τί δ', ὦ ταλαῖφρον, εἰ τάδ' ἐν τούτοις, ἐγὼ
> λύουσ' ἂν ἢ 'φάπτουσα προσθείμην πλέον;

In the original, Antigone is inexorably impelled to her death and is aware that she has "long been dead" (ἡ δ' ἐμὴ ψυχὴ πάλαι / τέθνηκεν, ὥστε τοῖς θανοῦσιν ὠφελεῖν, 559-60). The idea that she is a "living corpse" recurs in Antigone's own words (810-13; 850-52) and in Tiresias' words (1068-71), thus implying that her destiny is already predetermined and unavoidable.[312] Cocteau's Antigone, too, confesses her "crime" immediately, for she already knew it would cost her life (p. 26: "Je mourrai jeune. Tant mieux!"; "I will die young. Even better!"), and she expects a quick execution (p. 26):

> Je savais la mort au bout de mon acte. Le malheur était de laisser mon frère sans tombe. Le reste m'est égal.

---

ne ronflât plus, ne ventilât plus, ne coupât plus, une aoragie monotone. L'invisible me devint cette vitesse-là." Cocteau and Maritain (1964), 56.

[311] Kirkland (2010), 315, argues that Sophocles' Antigone "faces the future as in a sense already having happened and she therefore suffers no hesitation and, thus, no true decision".

[312] Moreover, because of her troubled family history, Antigone's doom is characterised by an inevitable pattern of transgression and suffering. See section 1.3.3. of this thesis.

> I knew that I had to die after my act. My only grief was to leave my brother without burial. The rest does not count.

During the conversation with Antigone, Creon asserts, once again, the certainty of Antigone's death and complains because "much time has been wasted" (p. 34: "Assez de temps perdu"). In most cases, Creon's arguments are reduced in Cocteau's version.[313] His tone is witty, sharp, and colloquial, and his speeches more direct and assertive (p. 19: "J'ai dit"; "I spoke"; and "Exécutez mon ordre"; "enforce my order"). Creon's impatience also emerges in his opening speech (162-214). Although some of the motifs of the original are preserved (such as the metaphor of the state as ship), this *rhesis* is condensed to the point that it is transformed into a "telegraphic dialogue with the chorus".[314] Cocteau's Creon does not mention Zeus (184) and his principles are reduced to a quick summary (p. 18):

> Avant qu'un homme se prouve, il est difficile de le connaitre. Pour moi je blâme celui qui gouverne sans consulter autour de lui. Je blâme encore le chef qui sacrifierait la masse aux intérêts d'un seul individu. Jamais je ne flatterai mon adversaire. Un prince juste ne manque pas d'amitié. Tels sont mes principes.
>
> Before a man proves himself, it is difficult to know him. For my part, I blame the man who rules without consulting the people around him. I also blame the leader who would sacrifice the masses to the interests of one individual. I will flatter no opponent. A just prince does not lack friendship. Those are my principles.

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[313] However, his attacks against money and its corruptive influence are preserved faithfully in the modern version (p. 22, compare lines 295-300). See also p. 20, which translates lines 220-21; p. 22 and line 322, as Creon suspects the guard of concealing the truth about Polynices' burial because he has been paid to do so; p. 47 and line 1055, in which Creon accuses Tiresias of greed. Although these accusations contrast with "Cocteau's enthusiastic embrace of the commercial world", proved by the sophisticated costumes and designs for the setting of his *Antigone*, they also remind the audience of Creon's unjust and authoritarian policy in contraposition to the rebellion of the young heroine; Smith (2015), 192.

[314] Fialho (2017), 65.

At the end, Creon's conversion occurs rapidly, although he is not quick enough to prevent the final catastrophe. Ironically, the only action which required the most extreme speed turns to be, fatally, the slowest. The Chorus bitterly assert (p. 53): "Il est bien tard" ("It is well late"). The same flat and repetitive expression is employed by Antigone earlier in the play, when she refuses Ismene's help (p. 30): "trop tard, Ismène, trop tard" ("too late Ismene, too late"). The play closes with the Chorus asserting (p. 55): "trop tard, Créon, trop tard" ("too late, Creon, too late"). Despite his rush and the Chorus' encouragement to hurry (p. 50: "dépêche-toi donc; la vengeance des dieux galope" and "va, va, va"; "hurry, then: the vengeance of the gods galops" and "go, go, go"), Creon is ultimately too late. His pessimistic consideration that "it is impossible to keep always the old laws" (p. 50: "Je crains qu'il soit impossible de s'en tenir toujours aux vieilles lois") points to the inevitability of the events, and implies that the tragedy could not have been avoided. Sophocles' Creon, too, claims that it is better to keep the "established laws" to life's very end (δέδοικα γὰρ μὴ τοὺς καθεστῶτας νόμους / ἄριστον ᾖ σῴζοντα τὸν βίον τελεῖν; 1113-14). Both Sophocles' and Cocteau's Creon fails to understand their mistakes and to acknowledge that the established laws must be followed. However, Cocteau's Creon emphasises the impossibility to respect the *vieilles lois,* as if the tragic destiny of the characters had already been decided.

Other examples could be selected to illustrate the accelerated time and concentration of Cocteau's innovative version. Cocteau reproduces faithfully the speed, which he thinks is already present in the original. He transforms his characters into "instruments in the machinery of tragic fate" and presents their actions as inevitable, already decided.[315] His deterministic view of tragedy is evident both in the allusions to the fact that "it is late" and everything has already happened as if pre-determined, as well as in the conspicuous reductions of the original text, which is greatly simplified and shortened to favour the mechanical unfolding of the story. Through the reduction of the play and the rapidity of action, Cocteau is able to emphasise the inevitability of the whole tragic process as presented in Sophocles' *Antigone*.

[315] Kirkland (2010), 319; 323-24.

5. Cocteau's Reduction of the Chorus

Cocteau's preoccupation with speed is also remarkable in the choruses, which are reduced to brief, narrative sequences. Cocteau chooses to summarise the content of the complex original odes and he cuts a considerable number of lines. For example, the entrance song of the Chorus recalls the original in its imagery and content. However, the descriptive narrative of the war, the cryptic allusion to the myth of the Labdacids and the invocation to the gods do not find room in the modern version. Rather, Cocteau's Chorus employ direct and colloquial language, as is evident from the first line (p. 18):

> Les Argiens ont fui à toutes jambes sous ton œil fou, soleil!
>
> The Argives have fled as fast as their legs would carry them under your frantic eye, o sun!

Cocteau's Chorus provide the essential details of the story: Polynices' betrayal and the attack of seven Argive captains against the seven gates of Thebes (as in the original lines 141-42). The description of Zeus' punishment (127-37), however, is reduced to a flat and direct statement (p. 18):

> Jupiter déteste la vantardise. Il a frappé de sa foudre les panaches et les armures d'orgueil.
>
> Jupiter detests arrogance. He has struck with his thunderbolt the plumes and armour of pride.

Cocteau intentionally refers to Zeus as "Jupiter", because it sounds better in French (p. 13: "se prononce mieux dans notre langue"). Cocteau gives the Latinised variants of the gods' names simply for aesthetic purposes. His aim is to transform the ancient play into something new; something that contrasts rather than chimes with modern actuality.

By employing highly innovative, colloquial, and political terms, Cocteau intentionally reminds the audience of the modernity of his adaptation.[316]

The second *stasimon*, too, is reduced to a list of general considerations that mirror the original text, but do not attempt to reproduce its complexity fully nor faithfully. Cocteau's Chorus simply mention the *fatalité* which has fallen upon Oedipus' house and suggest that *Jupiter* leads man towards disaster, concluding that "la race des hommes ne peut jouir d'une paix sans mélange" (p. 35, "the human race cannot enjoy unbroken peace"). Because it is the shorter of the choruses, the third *stasimon*, a hymn on Love and its power, is reproduced in details in the modern version (p. 42). Of the three mythological narratives of the fourth *stasimon*, Cocteau only maintains two – Danae's and Lycurgus' *exempla* – briefly summarised by the Chorus (p. 46). Whereas in the original the fifth *stasimon* expands in a long description of Dionysos and his attributes, in the modern play this song is resumed in few lines (p. 51).

The complex first *stasimon* (332-75), too, is remarkably abridged. It is condensed into a brief list of human achievements, listed in a telegraphic and inexpressive way (p. 23):

> L'homme est inouï. L'homme navigue, l'homme laboure, l'homme chasse, l'homme pêche. Il dompte les chevaux. Il pense. Il parle. Il invente des codes, il se chauffe et il couvre sa maison. Il échappe aux maladies. La mort est la seule maladie qu'il ne guérisse pas. Il fait le bien et le mal.
>
> Man is exceptional. Man sails, man ploughs, man hunts, man fishes. He tames the horses. He thinks. He speaks. He invents codes, he warms himself and he covers his house. He escapes diseases. Death is the only sickness that he cannot cure. He produces good and evil.

[316] In his dramas, Cocteau often breaks the theatrical illusion purposefully. In *Orpheus* for example, after the hero's death, his head remained onstage. The audience was shocked when the head began to talk and revealed its identity, declaring itself to be Jean Cocteau and giving its address.

The author intentionally flattens the text and elides the profoundly lyric lines of the original ode, privileging instead the action and its rapid enactment. The French *inouï* ("incredible", "exceptional", "unheard of") stands for the more ambiguous Greek *deinos*, which means "formidable", but also "fearful", "terrible". The density of language of the second *stasimon* is lost, absorbed in the rapidity of Cocteau's condensed play, which simply summarises the content of the Sophoclean lines. Although the expression of this *stasimon* is already rather linguistically paratactic and direct in the original Greek,[317] Cocteau reduces the description of human achievements to a very brief and concise list of verbs ("man sails, man ploughs, man hunts, man fishes"). By contrast with Cocteau's flat and repetitive formulation, Sophocles' text is characterised by a number of images (the wind, the immortal Earth, the birds) and adjectives.

The Greek adjectives παντοπόρος, "cunning, skilful", and ἄπορος, "without resource" (360-61), in reference to man, are absent in Cocteau's version, which simply suggests that man is good (*un brave homme*) if he honours the gods and their justice. The Greek ἀνθρώπος (333), which points more broadly to "humankind", in contraposition to ἀνήρ (347), which emphasises the virile, heroic man, is translated in both cases by Cocteau with the French *homme*. However, Cocteau chooses an apparently political term to refer to such a "man" who dishonours the city: the French *criminel* translates the vague relative clause of the Greek: ὃς τάδ᾽ ἔρδει (375).

In the first *stasimon*, the Sophoclean Chorus claim that man goes to his future without lacking any resource (ἄπορος ἐπ᾽ οὐδὲν ἔρχεται τὸ μέλλον, 360-61); however, unable to acknowledge his own limits, man produces both good and evil (355-67). Cocteau understands this advancing towards the future as a manifestation of the speed and rush intrinsic in humans in the machine age, which often lead man to his own self-destruction.[318] In the play, both Antigone and Creon rush towards a pre-established future and the speed of their action prevents them from seeing their own mistakes.
Much of the original's complexity is perhaps lost in Cocteau's compression. Dawe's comment that "it is very doubtful whether shrinking it can enhance a classical text or

[317] Griffith (1999), 182, speaks of the "even-flowing manner" and clear articulation of this song.
[318] The idea that Cocteau does not give "merely a fast-paced presentation of tragic events, but rather speed highlighted as the tragic itself" is argued by Kirkland (2010), 314.

even hint at fresh beauties", is representative of the critical opinion of a number of scholars.[319] However, something also is gained: the speed is a deeply revealing aspect of Cocteau's *Antigone*, which is able to keep pace with the rhythm of modern reality and life-style, extraordinarily increased by new technology. Moreover, Cocteau is able to convey, through speed, the sense of tragic inevitability which permeates the original play, presenting the actions as already predetermined and doomed to happen. The reader/spectator is ultimately left with a sense of uneasiness. The tragedy unfolds in front of the audience as an inevitable and mechanic concatenation of events, accelerating increasingly from the beginning to the end. It offers no answers or solutions to the unsettling questions that it poses.

6. Theatrical Determinism: "La machine des dieux"

In front of her sister Ismene, Cocteau's Antigone claims (p. 14): "J'espère que tu vas montrer ta race" ("I hope you will show your race"). This line recalls the original line 38, as Antigone predicts that Ismene will soon show her nature, whether it is noble (εἴτ᾽ εὐγενὴς πέφυκας) or corrupt, as their ancestors (εἴτ᾽ ἐσθλῶν κακή). In both plays, Ismene claims that she is "by nature" incapable of "fighting against a whole city" (p. 16; line 79). She remains, in Antigone's words, Creon's (p. 31) *jouet obéissant* ("obedient toy"). By contrast, Antigone does show her different "race": Cocteau's heroine has the inflexible and determined temper of her Greek predecessor and fights for human rights and freedom against the tyrannical demands of the State. References to her nature recur throughout the play. In Cocteau's version, the Chorus speak of her (p. 26) *naturel inflexible* ("inflexible nature"). In the original (471-72), too, the Chorus remark that Antigone's nature, like that of her father, is stubborn and wild, and speak of her self-willed passion (σὲ δ᾽ αὐτόγνωτος ὥλεσ᾽ ὀργά, 875). Antigone also proclaims that she was born (p. 29) "pour partager l'amour, et non la haine" ("to share love, and not hatred"; line 523). In the *agon* between Creon and Antigone, Cocteau's Creon compares Antigone to a (p. 26) "small and arrogant horse" (reproducing lines 476-79), thus pointing, once more, to her inflexible nature.

[319] Dawe (2013), 271. This opinion is contradicted, for example, by Kirkland (2010).

However, not only Antigone's rebellious spirit determines the audacious and irrevocable deed that leads to her death. The decision to bury Polynices is also dictated by other factors, which explicitly point to the inevitability of the tragic process. In Cocteau's version, this determinism is conveyed not only by emphasising the speed, but also through other references to the heroine's incestuous origin – which are already present in the original. For example, Sophocles' Antigone speaks of her family and of the doom that weighs upon the house of Labdacus (858-71). Cocteau's heroine, too, attributes the reason for her death to her doomed inheritance and adds that she is a "daughter of incest" (p. 43): "Je suis une fille de l'inceste. Voilà pourquoi je meurs." ("I am a daughter of incest. That's why I die."). With this line, added in the modern version, Cocteau accentuates the inevitability of the tragedy. Cocteau's Antigone is trapped in her role as Oedipus' daughter: the reference to her "race" also points to her own blood, the relation to her doomed family, and its history of incest. As the Chorus remark (p. 43): "C'est ta faute. Tu as violenté la justice. Tu payes encore pour Œdipe" ("It's your fault. You have violated justice. You pay once more for Oedipus").

In addition to the heroine's stubborn nature and her flawed family, fate plays a determinant role in both Sophocles' *Antigone* and Cocteau's version. Just as the Sophoclean Chorus suspect that the mysterious deed might be a "working of the gods" (278-79), so Cocteau's Chorus claim (p. 21):

> Prince, je me demande si ce n'est pas une machine des dieux.
>
> Prince, I wonder whether this is not a machine of the gods.

The expression "machine des dieux" points to Cocteau's later work *La Machine infernale* (1934), based on Oedipus' myth. In this work, the prologue addresses the audience directly:

> Regarde, spectateur, remontée à bloc, de telle sorte que le ressort se déroule avec lenteur tout au long d'une vie humaine, une des plus parfaites machines construites par les dieux infernaux pour l'anéantissement mathématique d'un mortel.

> Look, spectator, this machine fully wound up, in such a way that the spring slowly unwinds throughout a human life, one of the most perfect machines built by the infernal gods for the mathematical annihilation of a mortal.[320]

Antigone's death, too, is determined by this "machine of the gods", which can be identified with the theatrical determinism intrinsic in the play, "a perfect mechanism, a systematic complex of forces that operate with utter precision".[321] As Cocteau claims:

> Les personnages d'*Antigone* ne s'expliquent pas. Ils agissent ... Le moindre mot, le moindre geste, alimente la machine.
>
> The characters of *Antigone* cannot be explained. They act … The slightest word, the slightest gesture, fuels the machine.[322]

Therefore, Cocteau transforms Sophocles' notions of fate, free will, and the gods' role into a divine and theatrical machination which leads the heroine to her death. The gods and fate are briefly mentioned in Cocteau's reworking of the second *stasimon* (p. 34-5) and sporadically appear in the play. However, in the modern drama, the heroine's choices seem to be overdetermined by speed and by theatrical necessity rather than by human or divine motivations (or by a combination of both).[323] Antigone's "race", which refers both to her rebelliousness and to her genealogy, as well as the mechanistic nature of fate, ultimately determine the theatrical existence of Cocteau's characters.

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[320] Cocteau (1934), 12; translated by Fialho (2017), 70. The metatheatrical idea of pre-determined characters imprisoned in their fixed roles anticipates Anouilh's *Antigone*. Anouilh borrows Cocteau's imagery of the "infernal machine" in the second speech of the Chorus (p. 62), which plays on the notions of determinism and inevitability. See section 3.3.2. of this thesis.
[321] Kirkland (2010), 318. This mechanism recalls the idea of a *deus ex machina*; however, rather than solving the tragic conflict, it causes its inevitable unfolding.
[322] Cocteau quoted in Le Ber (2006), 141. Translation mine.
[323] On the "double motivation" identified by critics in Greek tragedy, see Battezzato (2017).

7. Cocteau's Antigone: "véritable anarchiste" or "sainte"?

Antigone's rebellious character emerges in the central confrontation with Creon. According to the stage directions (p. 27): "Antigone et Créon se parlent de tout près; leurs fronts se touchent." ("Antigone and Creon speak to each other closely; their foreheads touch."). [324] This confrontation is essentially preserved in Cocteau's adaptation, which privileges the rapid unfolding of the *stichomythia*.

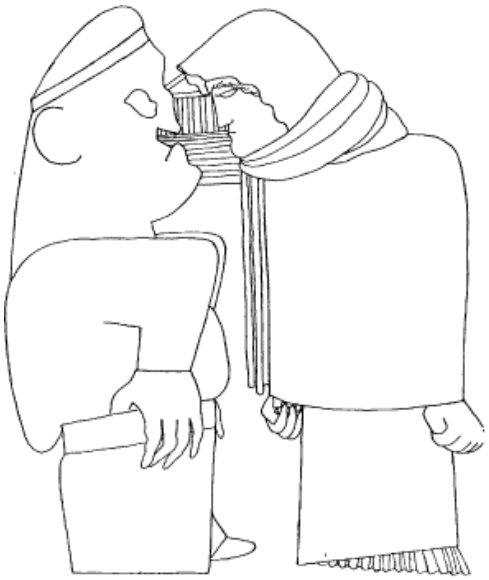

Fig. 5. Antigone et Créon, drawing by Jean Cocteau. See Steiner (1984), 149.

In this exchange, Antigone encourages Creon to kill her, as the privileges of his *despotisme* allow (p. 27). In addition to the world *despotisme* (ἡ τυραννίς, 506), other apparently political terms are concentrated in these lines. Creon speaks of Antigone's "crime" (the word is repeated three times: p. 27; 33; 35) and *antipatriotisme* (p. 28), and Antigone's deed is referred to as *résistance* and *révolte.* Other terms of rebellion which appear in the play are: *corrompu, envahisseur, gangrène, militaire, terroriste, anarchie.*[325] Creon believes that there is nothing worse than anarchy, provoked by Antigone's transgression of the law (p. 35):

[324] See illustration 5. On the exceptionality of this drawing, used to advertise the staging of Cocteau's play in the 1920s, see Meyer (2010), 274-75. Here, for the first time, Antigone "is depicted actively confronting political authority".
[325] See Le Ber (2002), 86.

> Il n'y a pas de plus grande plaie que l'anarchie … Et si l'anarchiste c'est une femme, c'est le comble.
>
> There is no greater wound than anarchy … And if the anarchist is a woman, it is the worst.

The same term is employed by Sophocles' Creon in his opening speech as he proclaims that there is no greater evil than anarchy (ἀναρχία, 672). Here Cocteau chooses to translate literally the Greek term ἀναρχία as *anarchie*, whereas it was traditionally translated in French as *désobéissance*.[326] It appears again few lines later in the dialogue between Creon and Haemon (p. 37):

> C'est donc bien agir que de louer les anarchistes.
>
> That is the right thing to do rather than praise the anarchists.

This line does not mistranslate the original (ἔργον γάρ ἐστι τοὺς ἀκοσμοῦντας σέβειν; 730), although the Greek text uses the word τοὺς ἀκοσμοῦντας ("those who disobey") rather than repeating the term ἀναρχία. By repeating the word twice, Cocteau calls attention to the concepts of anarchy and disobedience. The audience would easily associate the word "anarchy" with political anarchism, and Antigone with a rebellious anarchist who disobeys the orders of the king.[327] However, rather than with political anarchism and opposition to the *polis* as such, Cocteau identified himself with aesthetic anarchism.[328] Through his reworking of the Antigone story, Cocteau emphasised his own aesthetic rebelliousness and detachment from any established movement, trend, or academic convention. Cocteau "lived and wrote in total freedom,

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[326] Fraisse (1966), 274. See also Fraisse (1974), 117: Cocteau "insufflé sa haine de l'ordre et son goût de l'anarchie. Il met en valeur ce dernier mot alors que jusque-là les traducteurs préféraient désobéissance."
[327] In the same year of *Antigone*'s premiere, the Russian Anarchist Party met in Berlin, after being expelled by Russia. See Fialho (2017), 68.
[328] This argument is supported by Fialho (2017), 68-9.

unattached to conventions, codes, schools or groups".[329] In *Antigone*, Cocteau precisely found a means to express his longing for freedom, anarchy, as well as the rebellious feeling of his generation in the immediate post-war years.

Therefore, for Cocteau, anarchism means the rejection of coercive control and existing rules and conventions. He transforms his Antigone into a "véritable … anarchiste" who, like him, goes against the law – not the law of the *polis* but rather the law of canonical, established, and routinised doctrines.[330] The emphasis on the contemporary term "anarchy" also responds to aesthetic needs. Cocteau gives his characters a subversive, colloquial language, which contrasts with the solemnity and gravity of the tragedy. His *Antigone* is a very innovative and nonconformist tragedy, with few of the social revolutionary implications of its contemporaries. Cocteau's own personal style, his passion for theatre and costumes, as well as his search for originality and freedom, all emerge in the play.

In the stylisation of Cocteau's play, Antigone's death seems to express the theatricality of life, its absurd, inevitable, and theatrical unfolding.[331] In her farewell, Cocteau's Antigone laments her tragic fate in lyric lines, modelled almost exactly on the original.[332] Antigone's words, reiterated in an increasingly dramatic litany, sound flat and repetitive in Cocteau's version, as if dictated by a superimposed theatricality (pp. 43-4): "sans nom … sans nom", "ni chez les hommes, ni chez les ombres, ni chez les vivants, ni chez les morts", "rien … rien … rien et personne" ("without name … without name", "not amongst the men, nor the shadows, nor the living nor the dead", "nothing … nothing … nothing and no one").

Although Antigone's death is inevitable and the expression of a personal anarchism and self-assertion, it does not merely point to determinism and irrationality. Cocteau also shows the great strength and determination of the heroine in pursuing her infraction, and transforms her death into a cathartic act.[333] Cocteau himself referred to

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[329] Crosland (1955), 10.
[330] Cocteau (2003), 29. Here Cocteau compares Antigone's rebellion to that of Jeanne d'Arc.
[331] See Oxenhandler (1972), 95: "Ce geste … est l'expression du théâtral dans la vie".
[332] The Chorus acknowledge that she will die "without being sick, without a wound" (p. 42): "Tu mourras donc sans être malade, sans blessure", which translates the original lines 817-22. In the same way as her Greek predecessor, Cocteau's Antigone compares her destiny to Tantalus' daughter (832-33), and invokes the people of Thebes to look upon her suffering (p. 46).
[333] See Urdician (2017), 48.

the heroine as his "patron saint" a few years after the production.[334] However, his Antigone is not a Christian symbol or saint in a conventional sense, as found in Pierre-Simon Ballanche's 1814 "pieuse fille d'Oedipe",[335] or as Robert Garnier's *Antigone ou la piété* (1580), which celebrated the piety of his "Christianised" heroine. Cocteau's Antigone is also not a political symbol or leader like Hasenclever's heroine, nor an icon of pacifism, as was Romain Rolland's Antigone (1915).

We can understand who and what this Antigone is through the Chorus' words in Cocteau's version: she is a (p. 43) "simple mortal" who becomes, nonetheless (p. 42) "libre, vierge, vivante, célèbre entre les mortes." ("free, virgin, alive, famous amongst the dead"). She is "alive" (*vivante*) and "free" (*libre*), although one may question whether she had in fact the choice to act as she did. The mention of "freedom" could in fact allude to the lack of free will in a world predetermined by fate and theatrical necessity. At the same time, she is "famous" (*célèbre*) because her myth is already well-known and familiar – although viewed from a different perspective, from the "distance of the air". She is a "virgin" (*vierge*) because she goes to her death before consuming her wedding, as she proclaims in her dramatic farewell (line 816; p. 42):

> Le dieu infernal va me prendre vivante, sans que je connaisse le mariage, sans que les chants du mariage répètent mon nom; c'est la mort qui m'épouse.
>
> The infernal god is going to take me alive, without knowledge of marriage, without the chants of wedding repeating my name; death marries me.[336]

This characterisation of the heroine by the Chorus, absent in the original, allows the author to emphasise the difference of this Antigone from other standardised or official appropriations. Sophocles' Antigone is brought to life by Cocteau in his innovative version and is transformed into a woman who contravenes the rules, a "madwoman", as Creon himself acknowledges in both the ancient (561-62) and modern play (p. 32):

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[334] Cocteau (1948), 58.
[335] Urdician (2017), 45.
[336] The same image recurs in Haemon's words (p. 39): "Je l'épouserai donc morte, aux enfers" ("I shall then marry her dead"), which, as Fialho (2017), 66, remarks, is Cocteau's own invention and echoes Sophocles' lines 654 and 1240-41.

"Ces deux filles sont complètement folles" ("Those two women are completely mad"). Antigone is "anarchic" also because she is a woman, and therefore, by principle, she has committed a double infraction: against the law and against the restrictions imposed upon women.[337] It is the "folly" of Antigone that transforms the heroine into a rebel who, like Cocteau himself, defies the obligations and restrictions of society. Greek tragedy itself is "anarchic" insofar as it represents a transgressive reversal of gender roles and exceptional women who contravene the expectations of society.

Cocteau's Antigone is both a "saint" and an "anarchist", but not in a traditional nor conventional way: rather, these notions are enriched with a distinctively new, theatrical, and personal meaning. By employing a contemporary and provocative language and by transforming the Greek heroine into both a rebellious anarchist who goes against the rules and a passive player manipulated by a theatrical "machine" that mechanically directs her to her death, Cocteau has changed Sophocles' *Antigone* in a remarkably personal and innovative way – a way which emphasises the aesthetic (rather than political) rebelliousness of the author.

8. *Antigone*'s "Ultra-Modern Sauce": the Reception of the Play

Cocteau's *Antigone* did not escape severe critique: if most of the avant-garde artists lauded his adaptation, strict Classicists objected to Cocteau's presumptuous rendition of a great classical work and to its novelty.[338] Cocteau himself spoke of the inability of the "traditionalists" (those "qui d'une œuvre antique n'aiment que la poussière", as Raymond Radiguet puts it) to appreciate his play.[339] The preview was marred by laughter from the fashionable, "who greeted as Coctelian quips lines that were straight from Sophocles".[340] During the *Antigone* performed at the theatre Vieux-Colombier the audience "snickered and laughed".[341] André Gide attended the single performance that was given on 15 January 1923 at Jean Coupeau's Théatre du Vieux-Colombier, and wrote of the piece in his *Journal*. He claimed that he was left feeling that this

[337] See Urdician (2017), 48.
[338] Fraisse (1974), 116.
[339] Radiguet (1922).
[340] Steegmuller (1970), 299. See also the negative reaction of André Breton, Raymond Duncan, and André Gide at the premiere; Sprigge and Kihm (1968), 147; Lange (1989), 158.
[341] Steegmuller (1970), 300.

Antigone "suffered unbearably" because of its "ultra-modern sauce". He referred to it as "Sophocles' play by Cocteau" and considered it "beautiful despite Cocteau" rather than because of him.[342] Despite such criticism, *Antigone* was performed two hundred times, a record for that era. Years later, however, Cocteau himself wondered whether this success had not been due to the presence of Luigi Pirandello's play *La Volupté de l'honneur* (*Il Piacere e l'Onestà*) on the same programme.[343]

Although it excludes the political, Cocteau's play is nonetheless a play of rebellion, highly abridged and personal, which anticipates later renderings of the ancient myth. The same metatheatricality and alienating effects employed by Cocteau in his *Antigone* were exploited by Anouilh and Brecht in their iconic versions. Therefore, Cocteau's apparently apolitical *Antigone* opened the way to the creation of more explicitly subversive *Antigones*. Gide himself, who had criticised Cocteau's "ultra-modern sauce", would employ the same "sauce" ten years later in creating his own "modernised" version of the Oedipus myth.[344]

Through his compression and de-politicisation of the ancient myth, Cocteau succeeded in restoring the ancient tragedy to contemporary theatre, to put modern, fashionable dress on ancient characters, to make them speak, once again, in a new, accessible way. Cocteau was interested in recovering the "living material" (*matière vivante*) of the play by emphasising a provocative and "anarchic" use of and dialogue with the tradition.[345] His *Antigone* is not a play of political resistance. It is nonetheless a play of artistic, personal resistance, as well as an example of historicised and modernised *Antigone* adapted to a specific context in the period of transition between the First and Second World Wars.

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[342] *Chronique* (1923), cited in Fraisse (1966), 275: "Intolérablement souffert de la sauce ultra-moderne à quoi est apprêtée cette pièce admirable, qui reste belle, plutôt malgré Cocteau qu'à cause de lui."
[343] Grossvogel (1958), 71.
[344] See Fraisse (1966), 275.
[345] Cocteau (1979), 93.

3.2.2. Arthur Honegger's *Antigone*

Cocteau's abbreviated and innovative *Antigone* was employed by Arthur Honegger few years later for the libretto of his own opera,[346] which was given for the first time on 28 December 1927 in Brussels, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie, with sets by Picasso and costumes by Chanel (as in Cocteau's version). It was then revived in 1928 at the Essen State opera, and it was also given in German in Zurich in 1934, in the translation by Leo Mélitz. Almost a decade later, in 1943, Honegger's opera was staged at the Opéra of Paris during the German occupation of France, with the collaboration of Cocteau who designed the costumes and setting.[347] Despite the strict ideological control over art and culture enforced by both Vichy and German authorities in this period, this production was a resounding success. Because Honegger carefully avoided the political and subversive aspects of the original and highlighted the heroic downfall of Creon rather than Antigone's defiant transgression, his *Antigone* was praised in collaborationist journals and it ran several times until the liberation.[348]

The successful 1943 revival of Honegger's opera is particularly relevant for the purposes of my thesis because it shows the consequences of "depoliticising" *Antigone* within the politically charged context of the 1940s. Furthermore, it offers an illuminating parallel with Anouilh's *Antigone*. The circumstances of the production of Honegger's *Antigone* are analogous to that of Anouilh's adaptation, which premiered a year later in Paris and was successfully performed both before and after the Liberation.[349] Both Honegger's and Anouilh's versions were informed by the interaction between current ideologies, propaganda, and political aims, and opened up different possible ways of interpreting the play's conflicts. By cautiously avoiding a

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[346] Honegger had already written five pieces for oboe and harp for Cocteau's *Antigone*; none of this music, however, is used in the opera. See Fulcher (2006), 661. In his prose work *Je suis compositeur* (1951), Honegger explained that he chose this subject "first of all because of its place as a peak of dramatic art, then because of Cocteau's extremely concise adaptation which made a wonderful publication"; Honegger quoted in Spratt (1987), 94.
[347] On the staging and costumes, see Fulcher (2006), 666-67.
[348] Halbreich (1999), 173-74. *Antigone* was successfully performed elsewhere in Nazi Germany; see section 3.3. of this thesis. On the "triumph" of this revival, see Fulcher (2006). Fulcher (2005) also offers a detailed account of the historical and political context. See also Cairns (2016), 134.
[349] On Anouilh's *Antigone*, see section 3.3.2. of this thesis.

clear-cut political agenda and by emphasising the moral and political ambiguities of the play, both authors were able to avoid censorship in this specific historical moment. When revived in 1943, Honegger's *Antigone* particularly suited the climate of the time and was able to play on the contradictions and compromises of Vichy France's policies. Faithful to both the German and French inspiration of the artist,[350] Honegger's opera highlighted the ambiguities of the Antigone-Creon conflict: "whether Antigone is its [the Republic's] victim or its symbol … is not obvious".[351] In Honegger's *Antigone*, Creon was humanised and treated heroically whereas Antigone was "no sympathetic Greek maiden".[352] It was Creon's dramatic fall which provoked the sympathy of the audience. This aspect is not absent in the Sophoclean original, in which Creon is shown as he progressively advances towards the catastrophe and realises his self-destructive mistakes. In this context, the positive ideological treatment of the Theban king allowed conservative critics to interpret Creon as a heroic leader and to identify with his position.

Honegger's introduction of innovative techniques and jazz influences, which testify to the "modernist" inspiration of his opera, could have been criticised by the official authorities and by the most traditionalist factions and critics.[353] Both Vichy and German authorities favoured nationalism and traditionalism rather than modernism. However, Fulcher argues that a certain type of "modernism" was accommodated by the authorities and especially suited the eclecticism of Honegger's opera.[354] In his *Antigone*, Honegger combined experimental techniques, such as the atonal sections indebted to Arnold Schoenberg, with more traditional styles and tonality, which recalled Stravinsky.[355] He employed four voices for the choruses (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) as well as a great vocal range for the characters, together with the technique of declamation (*Sprechstimme*).

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[350] Honegger was born in German Switzerland but he grew in Paris where he remained for the entire duration of the war and adopted neutral Swiss citizenship; see Velly (2005). As Fulcher (2006), 656, puts it, "he [Honegger] was confused about his cultural identity and the means to express it (as *Antigone* shows)".
[351] Fulcher (2006), 668.
[352] Fulcher (2006), 663.
[353] For a detailed musical analysis of Honegger's *Antigone*, see Spratt (1987), 93-146; Halbreich (1999), 455-69; Fulcher (2006), 661-64.
[354] Fulcher (2006), 649.
[355] See Sprout (2000), 159-60; 167-71.

The dialogues between the characters were accompanied by specific themes and motives. For example, the entry of the guard was accompanied by a new theme, in order to illustrate his nervous state. During Antigone's dramatic farewell, jazz timbres resonated in the background. This fragmentation and combination of experimentalism and tradition made Honegger's *Antigone* less threatening and acceptable to the authorities. Honegger's choice of *Antigone,* a classical play modernised by Cocteau, exemplifies the author's desire to combine tradition and innovation.

Moreover, because Honegger collaborated with pro-Vichy journals, such as *La Flèche* and *Plans*, he was seen in a favourable light by both Vichy and Nazi authorities.[356] Honegger's accommodating attitude towards the regime, his aesthetic and musical eclecticism, as well as his ambiguous representation of the Antigone-Creon conflict (which tended to sympathise with Creon but ultimately avoided a clear moral standpoint) favoured the positive critical reception of his *Antigone*. Composer Werner Egk, favoured by the Nazis, commented on the "terrifying, morally disorienting effect" of Honegger's opera and collaborationist critic André Coeuroy emphasised the contradictory approach of the author, who nonetheless created in his *Antigone* a "reforming innovation".[357] Overall, contemporary critics praised the innovative music, choruses, as well as the heroic representation of Creon.

The fact that Honegger's opera was positively received in Nazi-occupied France proves that his *Antigone* suited the authorities, despite its subversive potential, because of its classical subject matter and the sympathetic treatment of Creon. By ignoring the play's anti-authoritarian potential, Honegger's *Antigone* did nonetheless represent a political act – not an act of resistance but an act of collaborationism with the authorities, which intended to avoid a direct association of Antigone with political resistance. His *Antigone* is thus an important case study in my analysis of the politicisation of the ancient myth, which shows that depoliticising *Antigone* could have important ideological implications within the politics of Nazism.

A different approach was adopted by Portuguese writer António Sérgio de Sousa in his political version of Sophocles' *Antigone* (1930). Sérgio distanced himself from Cocteau's and Honegger's apolitical approach and gave the play a clear, political,

[356] Fulcher (2006), 666.
[357] See reviews in Fulcher (2006), 671; Halbreich (1999), 174.

and contemporary resonance. Thus, he continued the trend of politicisation of the *Antigone* which culminates with Anouilh's and Brecht's iconic versions.

3.2.3. António Sérgio de Sousa's *Antigone* (1930)

1. Introduction

The twentieth century is a determining period for the shaping of a number of political *Antigones* in Portugal, where the Sophoclean drama becomes an iconic play to express the voice of resistance against dictatorship. Despite the recent interest in the reception of the play in Portugal,[358] the Portuguese version by António Sérgio de Sousa, written in 1930, has not become iconic or influential.[359] The play only circulated clandestinely at the time, nor was it a success or did it achieve the change anticipated by the author. Today Sérgio's *Antigone* is as good as dead, perhaps because the dictatorship is no longer the concern of the new generation and is now far back in time. Sérgio's *Antigone* does not have the topicality of other versions, nor the malleability of the original and its ability to transcend localised situations and concerns. The political allegory of his adaptation, unlike that of Sophocles' *Antigone*, is unmistakably clear. In Sérgio's one-sided interpretation, Creon is the unqualified villain, whereas Antigone is the exemplary hero who dies for the cause of freedom and equality. Sérgio's intentionally clear-cut representation of the Antigone-Creon conflict highlights the autocratic side of the tyrant against Antigone's rhetoric of protest, as was the case in Hasenclever's version.

Such a polarised representation of the conflict partly reduces the ambiguities and complexities of the original. However, Sérgio also introduces innovations and changes which transform Sophocles' *Antigone* into a new, didactic, and political work, directly relevant to the specific political situation of Portugal. Sérgio's *Antigone* is important for my investigation of the politicisation of the ancient play because it is an

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[358] A volume dedicated to the reception of *Antigone* in Portugal was published in 2017: Morais, Hardwick and Silva (2017).

[359] The only edition of the play is *'República': António Sérgio, Antígona. Drama em três actos* (1930). There is an Italian translation by Cuccoro, with an introductory essay by Pattoni (2012). On Sérgio's *Antigone* see Pattoni (2010); Silva (2010); Morais (2017a-b).

exemplary case of a "politicised" *Antigone* adapted to a specific context in a particular historical moment. The author offers a self-conscious and explicitly political understanding of Sophocles' tragedy, exploited to express his own political contestation and critique of the dictatorship.

Morais' recent chapter, exclusively dedicated to Sérgio's play, is alert to the political aspects of this *Antigone*.[360] However, rather than listing the characters of Sérgio's play, itemising how each character or dialogue allude to contemporary leaders or events (as Morais does), I shall analyse the text in close comparison with the original, focusing on what the author has reconfigured, changed, or omitted. Moreover, as part of my project of studying the politicisation of the Antigone theme in twentieth-century Europe, I shall heighten the focus on the political aspects of Sérgio's reading of *Antigone*.

After his first *Antigone* was published in 1930, Sérgio engaged with the play in 1950, to criticise the Salazar dictatorship (though this version remained unpublished) and in 1958, in protest against presidential electoral fraud. The revived piece of 1950 is a parodic version defined by the author himself on the frontispiece as a "historico-philosophico-political dialogue in dramatic form".[361] In this version, through the use of irony and parody, Sérgio polemically condemned the network of opportunistic and self-interested spies and priests and showed that they were as responsible for the injustice of society as the tyrant. Sérgio used the first three scenes of this version years later in his "Sexta Jornada" ("Sixth Day"), part of the work *Pátio das Comédias, das Palestras e das Pregações* ("Courtyard of comedies, lectures, and sermons"), published in 1958, in the context of political upheaval caused by presidential electoral fraud.

The fact that Sérgio adapted the Sophoclean play three times is a clear indication of his interest in the ancient tragedy and his belief that it could be adapted to new socio-political contexts as the political reality of Portugal evolved in the mid twentieth century. With its dialogic form and its political issues, *Antigone* particularly suited Sérgio's intention to present dialogically the plurality of different, irreconcilable

[360] Morais (2017a), 113-39. This chapter is an almost verbatim English translation of his article, in Portuguese, published in 2001 in the journal *Agora*.
[361] Morais (2017b), 142. See also Morais (2010), 300-5, which offers a quick overview of Sérgio's variations on the Antigone theme.

positions. Sérgio's engagement with the *Antigone* inaugurated a number of other adaptations written in Portugal during the turbulent years of dictatorship, such as the version by Júlio Dantas, the *Oedipus Trilogy* by João de Castro Osório (1954), and the *Antigone* by António Pedro and Mário Sacramento (1959).[362] Portuguese authors drew on the political significance of the *Antigone* in order to evoke the turbulent situation of their country and invoke a reaction against an oppressive and autocratic government.

2. Contextualisation: a "Drama" or a "Pamphlet"?

A philosopher, politician and historian, Sérgio was exiled under the military dictatorship of António de Oliveira Salazar (1926-1974) for his political opposition to the regime.[363] The dictatorship, which lasted for almost 50 years, brought with it riots, repression, protests, and unsuccessful coups supported by the opposition. The political events taking place in Portugal at the time are a determining factor for the understanding of Sérgio's clear-cut interpretation of the *Antigone* as a play of political resistance against tyranny.[364] Written at a very turbulent time for his country, Sérgio's adaptation of *Antigone* overtly relates to the socio-political situation of Portugal in these years and creates parallels between characters in the play and modern day politicians and officials.[365] Antigone's protest against Creon's summary executions alludes to the effort of Portuguese resistance against the military dictatorship of Salazar. Sérgio's *Antigone* was published in 1930 and initially circulated in the underground press. At the moment of its publication, the play provoked a storm of controversy. In a review which appeared in the student journal *Acção* and entitled "Fraude litéraria", Sérgio's play was heavily criticised and the author was accused of having plagiarised

[362] On these Portuguese versions see Silva (2010), 200-4; Morais, Hardwick and Silva (2017), part 2.
[363] Forced into exile by the dictatorship, Sérgio joined the opposition group known as the *Liga de Defesa da República* in 1927, when he was in Paris.
[364] In this period, Portugal saw a series of revolts and elections. After only a month, Gomes da Costa's moderate government was overthrown by Mendes Cabeçadas, who was soon replaced by General António Óscar Fragoso Carmona. Salazar's *Estado Novo* followed this period of political instability and social strife. On the historical context of these turbulent years of military dictatorship, see the introductory essay in Pattoni (2012); Morais (2017a), 113-17.
[365] For example, Creon can be associated with António Óscar Fragoso Carmona and behind Apollodorus stands Portuguese Minister of Finance Sinel de Cordes. On other contemporary allusions, see Morais (2017a), 131-36.

Jean Cocteau's version.[366] Cocteau's *Antigone* had been revived in 1927 and published in 1928, when Sérgio was exiled in Paris. It is possible that Sérgio was inspired by Cocteau's abridged version and used it as a model or point of departure for his own adaptation.[367] However, because Cocteau's play is itself a faithful reproduction of the original (in what remains of the original), the similarities with Cocteau can also be considered similarities with the Sophoclean text.[368] Like Cocteau, Sérgio greatly reduced the substance of the original and kept the passages that are "mandatory … if one wants to write an *Antigone*", as he claimed.[369] Moreover, Sérgio introduced a number of innovative elements and divergences that call attention specifically to the political contemporary reality of Portugal in the late 1920s, thus departing from Cocteau's apolitical version in a number of ways.

Sérgio's *Antigone* differs from Cocteau's version also because it is written in prose and verse and takes the form of a political essay in dialogic form rather than a play. Sérgio was primarily a philosopher and essayist rather than a theatre director.[370] As in his pamphlets and essays, published in the *Seara Nova* journal, in his *Antigone* Sérgio attempted to promote civic awareness and critical thinking that would lead the public to an enlightened Democracy characterised by justice, freedom, and equality.[371] It has been argued that Sérgio chose a dialogue form for his *Antigone* because it helped "develop a clearer explanation and analysis of the principles and values advanced by the author".[372] In Sérgio's version, many characters progressively challenge the authority of the king and question the unconditioned obedience to his despotic orders in long speeches, which resemble autonomous political pamphlets and programmatic commentaries on socio-political matters (for example, the tirade made by Critoboulus in Act 1, scene V, the speech delivered by Alcimacus in Act 3, scene IV, and the final speech delivered by the Messenger in Act 3, scene IX).

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[366] See Pattoni (2012), section 4.
[367] The influence of French models in Portugal in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been remarked by Morais, Hardwick and Silva (2017), 4.
[368] As Sérgio suggested in his response to the review. Morais (2017a), 119-20.
[369] Morais (2017a), 121.
[370] Although he recognised the "capacité pédagogique du procédé théâtral", Sérgio was not "un homme de théâtre"; see Silva (2010), 289.
[371] On the "luminous principles of Democracy" promoted by the *Liga*, see Morais (2017a), 118.
[372] Morais (2017a), 122.

Although these speeches clearly express the author's political aims, they are not completely emotionless or detached reports. Rather than offering a clear, plain, and analytical confrontation of different points of view, the speeches of Sérgio's characters are often emphatic, agitated, and pathetic. This is evident in a passage in which Critoboulus, one of the officers who doubts the legitimacy of the king, voices his indignation in front of the abuses and lies of tyranny. Rather than explaining such ideals in clear, ideological, and systematic terms, Critoboulus is overwhelmed by his feelings of frustration and outrage. His speech redounds of questions, exclamations, and shifting thoughts. It resembles a stream of consciousness, illogical and nervous, rather than a critical pamphlet (as the author wished his *Antigone* to be), as it is evident in this short extract from his long speech (pp. 26-7):

> Que é que se salva, quando se perde a verdade? Que é que se salva, quando se perde a alma? Só queremos vermes em tôrno de nós ... Mas que remédios? Fecham-se os olhos, só para não vêr ...
>
> What is left, once truth is lost? What is left, when soul is lost? We only want worms around us … But what remedy? Our eyes are closed, just so we don't see …[373]

As Critoboulus himself reveals in his speech, he is not talking rhetorically ("não faço retórica"): he is saying what comes from the heart ("o que trago no coração"). Throughout Sérgio's *Antigone*, it is possible to detect several passages and speeches that reveal anxiety and fears, expressed through rhetorical questions, repetitions, and frequent exclamations. For example, in the second scene of Sérgio's version, Ismene's pathetic exclamations contrast with Antigone's essential and calm replies (p. 15):

> ISMÉNIA. Olha: só tenho na cabeça imagens de morte, que se sucedem na memória e se cruzam rápidas como relâmpagos, sem me deixarem dormir nem descansar. ... Os meus pensamentos são labaredas ... labaredas que se sucedem

[373] All quotations are taken from Sérgio (1930). English translations are mine.

> furiosamente – loucas, descomunais – agitadas por ventos desencontrados na fornalha tonta da imaginação. E sobre tudo lançam sombras, sombras, grandes sombras ...
>
> ISMENE. Look, I only have images of death in my head, which follow each other in memory and criss-cross as fast as lightning, without letting me sleep or rest. ... My thoughts are flames ... flames that follow one another furiously – crazy, enormous – agitated by mismatched winds in the dizzy furnace of imagination. And above all cast shadows, shadows, great shadows ...

Therefore, although intended almost as a "Platonic" dialogue to express his ideological program, Sérgio's *Antigone* indulges in pathetic moments of despair that resemble a dramatic sequence rather than a systematic pamphlet.

Although his adaptations of *Antigone,* including his later versions, were never staged, Sérgio left some sketches and notes for the costumes and sceneries and it is possible that he contemplated the possibility of performing it. An essay and a performance are different modes of presentation which display different voices: although perhaps less directly pedagogical and systematic than a critical pamphlet, a performance can appeal to and engage with the public. Aware of this distinction, Sérgio entitled his work "drama", but then employed the form of a three-act dialogue, perhaps because he felt that a dialogue and its internal monologues could have a more direct impact.

However, Sérgio's *Antigone* is a deeply engaged and dramatic text, which reveals the author's own sentiment of rebellion and longing for freedom. His *Antigone* retains a remarkably unique and original "Portuguese flavour" – a longing for freedom and luminous hope – which is absent in other versions, including Cocteau's *Antigone*, despite the accusations of plagiarism made against the author.

3. Sérgio's *Antígona*: Departures From the Original

Described by the author himself as a "little piece of work" (*obrita*) or "booklet" (*folheto*), as well as a "propaganda manifesto" (*manifesto de propaganda*), and a

"social study in dialogic form" (*estudo social em forma dialogada*),[374] Sérgio's *Antigone* is a political denunciation of the dictatorial repression experienced by Portugal in the 1930s. In adapting *Antigone* to this specific socio-political context, Sérgio introduced many deviations to the plot as well as new characters and sparse allusions to the contemporary reality. At the same time, it is possible to detect iconic lines and parts adapted almost *verbatim* from the original. In the second scene alone, in the exchange between Antigone and Ismene, there are several lines which evoke the original, for example (p. 17): "[ajudar] a levantar o cadáver de Polinice" ("to help me raise Polynices' body", which recalls line 43); (p. 17): "somos mulheres; não nos compete guerrear com os homens." ("we are women; it's not our duty to fight like men.", lines 61-2); (p. 19): "eu desejo agradar aos mortos" ("I wish to please the dead", line 74).

The third scene, in which Antigone invokes dawn (*alvorada*) and the light of the sun (*luz do sol*), also recalls the *parodos* of the original. In the *parodos*, the Sophoclean Chorus address the sun and light of the day (100-3), expressing relief after the victory over the invading army. Although the words connoting light and brightness recall the original, Sérgio's Antigone does not celebrate the victory, but rather asks for courage and freedom, as well as the dissipation of illusions (p. 21): "Faze-nos ver, luz do sol, não fantasmas, mas idéjas; varre as ilusões que nos prendem a alma, torna-nos claros e livres em ti!" ("Show us, light of the sun, not ghosts, but ideas; sweep away the illusions that hold our soul, make us luminous and free in you!"). This exalted and profound speech contrasts with the invocation of the sun by the "first official" in the following scene (p. 29), which functions as an ideological counterpart. By contrast with Antigone, the official sees the appearance of the sun (repeated three times: *o sol*, *lindo sol*, and *cascada de luz*) as a sign of joy for the recent victory. Like the Sophoclean Chorus, the officials celebrate the "peace" established by the "order" (*a vitória da Ordem*) in Thebes of the seven gates (p. 29, line 101). These references clearly allude to the Sophoclean *parodos*, thus providing a further connection with the original.

[374] Sérgio (1931), 46, translated in Morais (2017a), 7; 119; 122.

Although generally faithful to the original, Sérgio's version also departs from Sophocles' text and plot. A particularly noteworthy innovation is the reduction of the themes related to *genos* and family, which are marginalised in favour of a politicisation of the ancient myth.[375] For example, Eteocles and Polynices do not fight in a dynastic war and do not kill each other. They are killed in a democratic revolt guided by Polynices and repressed by the authoritarian Creon. Whereas Eteocles is one of Creon's officials, Polynices represents the opposition.[376] The positive representation of Polynices, introduced by Critoboulus (p. 26) and later by Tiresias as a noble, just man (p. 62), emphasises the tyrannical attitude of Creon. The omission of Eurydice also prevents the public from empathising with Creon's misfortune at the end of the tragedy.

Moreover, the conflict between Ismene and Antigone is greatly reduced in the modern version. Unlike in Sophocles (69-70; 543), Antigone does not condemn the passivity of her sister but rather protects her. Ismene's role is thus marginal, and she does not represent an ideological counterpart to Antigone; rather, she is presented as a fragile and fearful woman, who suffers an almost pathological condition of perpetual anxiety.[377] She symbolises those who surrender to the despotism of the state and are unable to counteract. Despite her weakness, Antigone does not show hatred towards her sister as in the original, but she wants to help her.

In Sérgio's adaptation, Antigone is not isolated in her rebellion. She is loved and supported by the people, by contrast with the original, in which the Chorus admire her action only to a certain extent (836-38; 872), but disapprove of her boldness and transgression (853; 875). Sérgio's Antigone is admired throughout Greece, as we learn from Tiresias (p. 66: "a mulher que toda a Grécia adora") and the nurse Creusa (feminine form of Creon), one of the characters introduced by Sérgio. She claims that Antigone is (p. 105): "a alma mais nobre de toda a Grécia". Also Ismene admires Antigone; in her words, Antigone is (p. 59): "so beautiful ... so pure … so noble … so

[375] See Pattoni (2010), 135-37.
[376] A similar change occurs in Brecht's *Antigone*, although in his version Polynices and Eteocles fight side by side and Polynices is killed by Creon after his attempt to leave the battle. See section 3.4.1.
[377] See especially the exchange with Antigone (Act 1, scene II), in which Ismene asks a number of irresolvable questions in much agitation, expressing her uncontrolled fear and anguish in repeated exclamations full of *pathos*.

deeply generous and magnanimous ... ("tão bela … tão nobre … tão pura … tão cheia de generosidade e de grandeza …").

Although Antigone is loved by everyone, Sérgio does not explain the reason why she is held in such high esteem. The claim that everyone in Thebes supports her (733), which is not substantiated in the original, does indeed prove true in Sérgio's reinterpretation of *Antigone*. After an uprising has prevailed in the neighbour land of Orchomenia (to be identified with Spain),[378] Creon decides to promote a negotiation with Haemon in the attempt to reach a compromise and develop a transition (*transição*) to democracy: "if the authoritarian regime prevails, Oedipus' daughter will be irrevocably sentenced to death; if democracy wins, then Antigone may be used as a hostage during the negotiations for the transition".[379] As soon as he thinks that he has neutralised the opposition, Creon betrays his son and the negotiations predictably fail. Creon's opportunism and his quick dismissal of the negotiations reflect the corruption, instability, and contradictory nature of Portugal's political scene. This innovation in the dramatic sequence thus serves to allude, once more, to the contemporary reality of Portugal and to highlight the arbitrary power of tyranny.

The final, successful revolt of the crowd as well as the solidarity demonstrated by the other characters towards Antigone clearly reflect Sérgio's hope of a quick end to the dictatorship, as happened in Spain, where the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera had ended on 28 January 1930. However, Sérgio died before the end of the dictatorship, which only occurred in 1974.

a. The Masses

In Sérgio's version, great attention is given to the officers, advisors, spies, and military, anonymously referred to as "First Official", "Citizen", "Sentinel", "Guard", or identified by first names – Ortágoras, Critóbulo, Hegesias, Alcímaco, etc.[380] Like the Sophoclean Chorus, they respond to Creon and give him advice, although they are given more space and agency than in Sophocles' play, and eventually rebel against

[378] Morais (2017a), 135.
[379] Silva (2017a), 425.
[380] Some of these names, such as Eutífron (in Plato: Euthyphro), Critóbulo and Ortágoras, are *noms parlants* and recur in Plato's dialogues; see Morais (2017a), 127.

Creon's despotic rule. Furthermore, unlike the Sophoclean Chorus, the different officials and supporters of the dictatorship are divided internally. For example, they argue over a certain Apollodorus, to be identified with the Minister of Finance João José Sinel de Cordes, who wasted a large amount of money and brought the country into a financial crisis in the late 1920s. Some want to expel him, others refuse to use the term "traitor" and are ready to forgive him. Paradoxically, the officials who should represent the order are constantly fighting and arguing, as one official, Euthyphro, recognises (p. 30):

> Não podemos continuar assim! Sempre em brigas, em altercações … nós, que nos dizemos necessários para manter a ordem!
>
> We cannot continue like this! Always in fights, in altercations ... we, who claim to be necessary to maintain order!

Some officials also suggest that they are not doing "anything but arguing" (p. 31): "Não fazemos senão brigar…" In the context of civil strife portrayed in Sérgio's version, the crowd cannot represent the univocal voice of the community but rather its conflicting points of view and internal division. Such continuous internal strife exemplifies the instability and shifting political goals of different factions in the turbulent political situation of Portugal.[381] In the midst of arguments and aggressive speeches, it is difficult to detect the truth, as exemplified by the almost oxymoronic sequence (p. 31):

> OFICIAIS. Mentira, mentira!
> OFICIAIS. Verdade, verdade!
>
> OFFICIALS. Lies, lies!
> OFFICIALS. Truth, truth!

[381] For example, the short-lived movements of the opposition started by Mendes Cabeçadas in Braga and Gomes da Costa in Lisbon "besides a general, albeit very vague and diffuse will to regenerate the Portuguese constitutional system ... had really not much else in common"; Morais (2017a), 114. The internal divisions of the opposition favoured the advent of the military dictatorship in Portugal.

This is also because the tyranny constantly hides, distorts, and changes the truth, as Sérgio's play shows very well. For example, after Antigone and Ismene exit, two spies appear and discuss in trivial terms how to report what they have seen to Creon (pp. 22-3). They admit that they have not heard what the two women had said. However, it is enough to refer something of their invention ("com mais umas coisas da minha invenção") in order to obtain a good pay. This scene exemplifies the distortion of reality operated by mass media or by the promoters of the dictatorship to favour their own interests and give a certain image of the regime.

Moreover, Sérgio's play shows that the divisions between the crowds are dictated by self-interest and opportunism. The changing opinion of the masses contrasts with Antigone's wise and firm position, which identifies itself with the general, rather than the individual, will. Unlike Hasenclever's crowd, Sérgio's masses are not divided because of their different background, age, or social status. Rather, the crowd is composed by several officials which belong to a uniformed corpus of officers. For this reason, some of them are simply referred to as "first", "second", "third" etc. officer. Although they should have the same aims and background, they express different ideological positions. Many of them begin to express doubts and protests, which reveal that the power of the dictatorship is progressively collapsing. Others simply encourage one another to celebrate and enjoy the victory, invoking Dionysus and the festivities.

Thus, the officials show a rebellious spirit which, in Hasenclever's version, is only latent at the start. One of the officials claims that they are in charge, not Creon (p. 31): "Quem manda aqui não é Creonte: somos nós. Creonte fará o que nós quisermos." ("Who commands here is not Creon: it's us. Creon is going to do what we ask."). However, after Creon's opening speech, nobody has the courage to speak up and some officials only express their disillusions in a low voice. Initially, their attitude reflects the obedience and submission of the Sophoclean Chorus, explicitly recalled by certain flattering lines (p. 36): "em nosso nome, mandarás nos vivos e mandarás nos mortos" ("on our behalf, you will govern over the living and the dead", lines 213-14); (p. 37): "Ninguém é tão tolo que queira a morte." ("Nobody is so foolish as to wish for death", lines 220-21). The servility of the crowds is increased by the presence of those who

support the dictator (such as Orthagoras) for their own self-interest and only experience a latent remorse.

Significantly, the first official to speak is Critoboulus. His long speech becomes a critical evaluation of political calculations, which condemns the dictatorship and the "forced solidarity" (*solidariedade forçada*) of the people. Critoboulus explicitly voices his malcontent and disillusion against tyranny, (p. 25) "uma farça vilíssima" (a similar expression is repeated by another official after Creon's speech, p. 36: "uma farsa hedionda"). He condemns the atrocity and horrors of the civil war, the absence of a clear reason behind it, and the complicity of the people in despotism, which only aims at (p. 25) "tiranizar o povo para o roubar, e roubá-lo para o tiranizar" ("tyrannise the people to steal from them, and steal from them to tyrannise them"). He feels ashamed for the atrocities and passive acceptance of the people, enslaved by the tyrant and the Priests' College.[382] In addition to the tortures and punishments promoted by the tyrant, Critoboulus also condemns the hypocrisy and lies imposed by the dictatorship, to the point that (p. 26) "hoje, em Tebas, só se pode mentir." ("today, in Thebes, we can only lie"). Critoboulus' rhetoric of protest voices Sérgio's own political ideals. Through his speech, Sérgio is praising the people who, like him, decided to fight (p. 27) "servindo a liberdade e a dignidade de todos" ("at the service of everyone's freedom and dignity").

Despite his ideological and political aims, Critoboulus does not voice his opinion in front of the other officials but only in front of another official, Euthyphro. In his speech, he seeks his complicity and asks several rhetorical questions (p. 26, "Por que esperamos?"; "What are we waiting for?") which remain unanswered. Euthyphro is representative of those who passively and uncritically accept the status quo, unable to voice their torment and too scared or uncertain to act. Another character named Hegesias is representative of those who do not question anything and simply execute the orders. In a dialogue with another soldier, he admits that he "does not think" but simply follows the orders (p. 97: "não penso nada. Não tenho nada que pensar … não acho nada. Cumpro ordens.") because thinking is too hard for him ("pensar é coisa que

[382] On the reference to the Priests' College, see paragraph below.

me fatiga o cérebro"). It is much simpler, after all, to execute orders without questioning them (p. 98: "Cumpro ordens. Não penso mais").[383]

By contrast with those who uncritically accept the status quo, another character named Alcimacus voices his critique of the dictatorships in a passionate speech. He wonders whether the soldiers should still follow the orders if they go against the law itself and the civil rights of the people. He claims his portion of guilt: he, like the others, does not have the courage to oppose Creon's ignoble tyranny (*tirania abjecta*). Unable to counter-react, he simply wishes that the past could be forgotten (p. 100): "Ah! Se se pudesse suprimir todo o nosso passado".

Sérgio's crowds do not only include the spies and the officials, but also the anonymous mass of beggars, which is especially evocative of Hasenclever's representation of the crowd. Like Hasenclever's crowd, they suffer because of the dictatorship and heavy taxation. The mass scenes are emblematic of the great political and contemporary stance of Sérgio's work and represent an important innovation which highlights the socio-political relevance of this *Antigone*.[384] However, in Sérgio's version, the miserable crowd only appears in one scene (pp. 42-3). More attention and agency is given to the officials, both those who long for freedom and those who are subjected to the power of tyranny. By showing that the dictatorship relies upon such an internal network of collaborators and supporters, Sérgio condemns the complicity of the people, whose uncritical attitude and collaborationism make the dictatorship possible. The speeches of the officials voice the author's own ideals and concerns and serve to exemplify the complex power-relations behind the maintenance and disintegration of dictatorial power. They also reveal his disillusion towards popular rule: although in his version the revolution is successful, Sérgio shows that there is need for a leader to guide the crowd and avoid the repetition of the same mistakes.

[383] The guard in Anouilh's version also claims that he is only executing the orders. See section 3.3.2.
[384] Behind the members of the Chorus, too, it is possible to detect contemporary figures. See Pattoni (2010), 146-47.

b. Creon and the Dictatorship

In Sérgio's version, Creon is not the legitimate head of state. Rather, he embodies the arbitrary power of tyranny, supported by the reactionaries and the Priests' College. The reference to the Priests' College is a clear contemporary allusion: it hints at the complicity of the Church and its support of the Salazar dictatorship.[385] Rather than Salazar, critics believe that behind Creon stands the figure of General António Óscar Fragoso Carmona, President of Portugal between 1926 and 1951.[386] When he was elected, Sérgio believed that his transitory regime was a necessary means to "prepare the advent of new, true Democracy".[387] However, Carmona progressively consolidated a dictatorial power which denied fundamental human rights, promoted repression and censorship, and enabled the progressive rise of Salazar's dictatorship.[388] Similarly, Creon had been elected in the hope that his transitory dictatorship would restore order after a period of unrest, gradually leading to the restoration of democracy (as Tiresias reveals, pp. 64-5). However, Sérgio's Creon proves to be an authoritarian and opportunistic tyrant who arbitrarily supports his own personal interests and persecutes any opponent, depriving the people of civil rights and freedom. In Sérgio's version, there is no legitimisation for his position, which is presented as fully wrong from the outset. In the original, Creon's intransigence and tyrannical attitude are criticised, but he is not presented as an out-and-out tyrant.[389]

At the same time, Sérgio's Creon is perhaps more open to taking advice from the officers than Sophocles' Creon is. He claims that he will hear their advice and, after his speech, he asks reassurance and confirmation that they agree (p. 36): "É justo, pois não é, meus caros amigos e companheiros?" ("It is fair, isn't it, my dear friends and companions?"); "Não vos parece que digo bem?" ("Don't you think I speak well?"); "Vós me direis o que se deverá fazer …" ("You'll tell me what should be done ..."). His openness to taking advice might be indeed an early sign that he fears the internal opposition of the officers. After his opening speech, he asks twice whether

[385] The Priests College is "a clear allusion to the monarchists and to Salazar and his Catholic Center supporters"; Morais (2017a), 123.
[386] Pattoni (2010), 126; Morais (2017a), 116; 123.
[387] Morais (2017a), 115.
[388] Morais (2017a), 115.
[389] See section 1.3.1. of this thesis.

anyone has something to add (p. 36: "Niguém mais quer falar?"), but nobody contradicts him. Later, he asserts that he will discharge Apollodorus, "if this is what the officials want" (p. 46: "se os oficiais com efeito não querem mais Apolodoro, que lhes façamos a vontade."), thus showing his own submission to their will. Later in the play, he also asks Haemon's advice and claims that he is willing to bury Polynices and save Antigone. However, he changes his mind after he finds out that the regime of his neighbour Lisandro has been overthrown. Throughout the play, he is simply moved by his own opportunistic interests rather than by his concern for the *polis*.

Like Sophocles' Creon, Sérgio's Creon calls upon the patriotism and strength of the people in his opening speech. He advocates strong leadership and unquestioned obedience. His regime requires order and discipline, as well as a constant control, espionage, censorship, and execution of traitors. He asks to enlist new spies, taken from kids, old people, mendicants, and even prostitutes (p. 34: "às vossas ordens, para espionarem, ponde os velhos e as crianças, os medigos e as prostitutas"). In his speech, Sérgio's Creon warns the officials against the opposition, which only brought ruin, anarchy (line 672), and impiety, a motif added by Sérgio perhaps to recall, by contrast, the "piety" valued by his Antigone.

Thoroughly Sophoclean is the motif of "money" and economic profit, emphasised by Creon in his speech. However, Sérgio adds contemporary references: his Creon claims that the opposition is supported by the gold of Scythia, which has been interpreted by critics as an allegory of Soviet Russia.[390] While condemning the avidity of the opposition, he repeatedly mentions the financial reward due to his collaborators, in order to secure their unquestioned support. Creon's emphasis on money, its corruptive power, and the wealth of those in power contrasts with the scene that follows, which sees the appearance of a crowd of starving beggars. Creon's reaction is blatant: he asks the flautists to play their flutes to cover their voices. Upon entering the palace, one of Creon's officials claims (p. 43): "Toca a comer, meus senhores! Vamos beber à nossa vitória! Bom proveito a todos!" ("It's time to eat, gentlemen! Let's drink to our victory! Everyone enjoy their meals!").

[390] Morais (2017a), 134.

In Creon's speech, even the gods and religion are associated with money. Religion is only a financial matter, a tool which grants money and order (p. 33): "Sim, sem a religião não há dinheiro! E sem uma espada que imponha a ordem, não há dinheiro nem religião!" ("Yes, without religion there's no money! And without a sword that imposes order, there's no money or religion"). This materialistic view of religion is corroborated by the fact that Creon enjoys the support of the priests, defined by himself as "cruel" and "hypocrite" (p. 46: "pérfidos, hipócritas"). Therefore, Sérgio's Creon contaminates several motifs of the original speech, notably money and anarchy, in a unique monologue which reveals his brutal despotism and cynical opportunism. Although he speaks of the (p. 35) "prosperity of the city" ("a cidade gloriosa e próspera"), Sérgio's Creon is not concerned with the welfare of the city nor does he support the impartial ideals expressed by Sophocles' Creon in his opening speech.

That money and mismanagement have a central role in Sérgio's play becomes evident in the scene in which Creon and Orthagoras discuss the critical financial situation of Thebes (pp. 45-8), an explicit parallel with the situation of Portugal. The solution offered by Sérgio's Creon for the lack of money caused by Apollodorus mismanagement is simply to increase the taxes. According to him, the people only have (p. 46) "para pagar e para calar … ou mete-se-lhe uma espada pela gúela abaixo" ("to pay and stay silent … or we'll put a sword down their throat").

Beyond the clear financial mismanagement for which both Creon and his ministers are responsible, Sérgio also reveals the brutality and blatant distortion of reality operated by the tyrant. Creon asks his officers to increase censorship and spread lies about the exiles and about the responsibility of the previous government in causing the financial crisis. He encourages his collaborators to lie as much as possible (p. 48: "mentir à vontade"). In particular, he wants the people to believe uncritically that the Scythians have paid four million escudo to the opposition, and asks Orthagoras to "fabricate the evidence" ("forja tu as provas"). However, the seer Tiresias reveals that nobody believes Creon's lie about the Scythians. Whereas Creon accuses Tiresias of being well paid to say so, as in the original (1055), the seer reveals that tyranny is only illusory and power cannot rely on violence and despotism (p. 65: "a fôrça bruta não remedeia nada; é uma ilusão").

Throughout his version, Sérgio brings attention to the opportunism, falsity, and brutality of the dictator. Creon's distorted vision of reality also emerges in the exchange with Haemon, in which he preaches the necessity for sons to obey their fathers (a Sophoclean theme) and claims that (p. 68) "os velhos … vêem sempre as coisas melhor do que os jovens" ("old people always know more"). However, Haemon recognises that the malcontent and opposition come precisely from old people (p. 70: "Mas, meu pai … são os próprios velhos os que discorda"). The theme of old age is scrutinised in the Sophoclean original.[391] In addition to the original, Sérgio's Creon claims that young people are idealist, philosophers. They are dangerous (p. 70: "os idealistas são sempre perigosos") and give a bad example (p. 71: "maus exemplos"). They do not understand that the world cannot be changed, whereas people with experience know that there is nothing anyone can do but be realistic (*realistas*), p. 69:

> A experiência, filho meu, diz-nos que o mundo não é melhorável. Piorável, sim, quando há mania de lhe meter justiça, ideologia, ideais … Melhorável, não. Há de ser sempre aquilo que é. Temos que nos resignar àquilo que é.
>
> Experience, my son, tells us that the world is not improvable. It can become worse, yes, when people insist on putting in it justice, ideology, ideals ... Improvable, no. It will always be what it is. We have to resign ourselves to what it is.

Creon's attitude is cynical and disillusioned.[392] He believes that (p. 69) "the greatest good is strong leadership" ("o maior dos bens é um govêrno forte, que imponha a ordem a todo transe e que não deixe falar os idealistas") and that society is to be identified with him ("a sociedade sou eu"). Creon does not understand that his own personal interest does not correspond to the interests of the city and its welfare.

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[391] The theme of "old age" does not only emerge in the exchange with Haemon. At the end, the Sophoclean Chorus claim that wisdom comes with old age. However, they also say that Creon's decree seems sensible, "if their years have not obfuscated their judgement" (line 681), thus implying that their old age might affect their understanding.

[392] It anticipates the cynical attitude of Anouilh's Creon. See Section 3.3.2. of this thesis.

Whereas in the original the focus of the play shifts at the end to Creon's suffering and downfall, Sérgio does not represent the Theban king as he suffers the loss of his son and wife and learns from his mistakes. There is no pity or justification for his intransigence and tyranny. This clear-cut presentation of Creon subverts the original model in favour of an actualisation and allusion to contemporary Portuguese dictators; it is a clear indicator of Sérgio's own political position and opposition to the regime.

c. Antigone, the "Law of Conscience" and Freedom

Against Creon's tyranny, Sérgio's Antigone is the champion of democracy and resistance. She is presented as a political dissident and rebel rather than as a princess. Whereas in the original Antigone is aware of her royal origin and nobility (38; 97) and the Chorus remark that she is the proud daughter of Oedipus (471-72), Sérgio's Antigone lacks aristocratic pride.[393] More clearly than her Greek predecessor, she stands for the whole community and she is accepted and supported by that community. In Sérgio's adaptation, the burial of Polynices becomes a pretext to express the heroine's dissent and rhetoric of rebellion, as was the case in Hasenclever's *Antigone*. Sérgio's Antigone calls upon justice and equality and believes in the rights of human conscience and rationality. She does not invoke the law of the gods (454-55), but rather a broader, universal, and moral law (p. 56): "na ordem que vem da alma … da justiça, do respeito mútuo" ("in the order that comes from the soul … from justice, from mutual respect").

Antigone's political contestation also retains Christianising aspects, which resurface in Sérgio's later versions.[394] Although her democratic ideals are compatible with Christian values, Sérgio's Antigone is not only a willing martyr (as was the case in Garnier, Rotrou, and Ballanche) and a victim. She is a new kind of rebellious heroine and freedom fighter, whose political protest actually brings about a change in society – as Sérgio was hoping for Portuguese society.

[393] See Pattoni (2010), 137-38. In the original, Antigone "speaks an aristocratic moral language"; Scodel (2010), 109.
[394] In particular, in the 1958 version. See Morais (2017b), 158-59.

It is in the exchange with Creon that Antigone's moral ideals stand out in opposition to Creon's petty and opportunistic mentality. Apart from sparse allusions and lines which explicitly recall the original (for example lines 469-70; 484-85; 504-5; 523), Sérgio changed the substance and content of the opposition between Antigone and Creon, heightening the focus on the political defiance of Antigone against the dictator. The exchange is constructed through the opposition between freedom and slavery. Creon claims that Antigone is (p. 53) "his slave" (*minha escrava*), but Antigone is determined to disobey and follow her own conscience. Tiresias, too, claims that (p. 65) "o povo de Tebas não nasceu para escravo!" ("the people of Thebes were not born for slavery"). Sérgio alludes here to the struggle of those intellectuals, philosophers, and writers who, like him, were fighting against the dictatorship.

Significantly, Creon calls Antigone (p. 71) "a philosopher" (*a filósofa*). To her idealist and philosophical arguments, which reflect Sérgio's own ideals, he contraposes the pragmatism of his realistic politics. With money, he claims, he can enlist philosophers (p. 53), "theorists of despotism" (*teóricos do despotismo*); he can force the people to praise the dictatorship and write his own "theories", complicit in his despotic regime. However, he cannot buy Antigone's conscience nor her obedience and freedom. By contrast with Creon's supporters, she refuses to give up her freedom and prefers to die. Like Sophocles' Antigone, she does not expect Creon to understand (p. 57): "Não espero que um cego veja a luz" ("I don't expect a blind man to see the light").[395] Antigone is referring to those people who do not want to see the truth or listen to their conscience. A similar phrase is reiterated by Tiresias, who claims that (p. 65): "Só acreditais no que os olhos vêem" ("you only believe in what the eyes see").

Through the characters of both Antigone and Tiresias, Sérgio condemns the tyranny, tortures, and violence of the dictatorship. He expresses the hope that, from now on, the people will learn the importance of freedom and will not repeat the same mistakes, as Tiresias claims (p. 64):

> Ai de Tebas, se deixarmos um dia que os chefes antigos voltem a governar como governaram então! Ai de nós, se não aprendermos depois disto a bem

[395] With subtle irony, Antigone's reference to "blindness" alludes to her father Oedipus' fate and reveals that Creon is just as blind as Oedipus and history threatens to repeat itself.

usarmos da liberdade! De futuro, espero que o povo estará àlerta, e saberá seguir o conselho dos justos!

Woe to Thebes, if we one day let the old rulers rule again as they governed then! Woe to us, if we do not learn after this to make good use of freedom! In the future, I hope that the people will be alert, and will know how to follow the advice of the just!

d. A Light of Hope

In the last part of the tragedy, drastically changed by Sérgio, a group of shepherds sing and dialogue in decasyllables in a bucolic environment which recalls the *Idylls* of Theocritus or the *Eclogues* of Virgil. In particular, the shepherds Corydon and Tityrus are inspired by the characters of *Idylls* 4, 3, and 7 (or the characters of *Eclogues* 1 and 2, 6, and 7).[396] This idyllic scene is remarkably original and distinctive of Sérgio's version. It reveals a specific interaction with an ancient model (Theocritus), which became especially popular in Portugal in the 1930s – also thanks to Agostinho da Silva's Portuguese versions of four *Idylls*, published between 1935 and 1936.[397] Sérgio's imitation of Theocritus in this scene can thus be considered an instance of early reception of Theocritus in Portugal.

In Sérgio's version, the shepherds could represent the persecuted and suffering members of the opposition. According to Morais, they represent "the peacefulness and the quietude of rural life", an idealised rural population detached from political reality.[398] It is true that Tityrus says that (p. 90) "aqui, nesta paz, tudo nos chega como ruído ao longe" ("in this peace, everything arrives as a noise coming from afar"). However, in the world of the shepherd there is (p. 88) "pain and torment": they speak of the heavy taxes and the progressive depopulation of the countryside. They sing of the death of Euryala, a young shepherd girl who accidentally died in the mountains,

[396] As demonstrated convincingly by Morais (2017a), 136-38. However, there are allusions to Virgil's *Eclogues* too, as noted by Pattoni (2012).
[397] See Rodrigues (2000), 46; Rodrigues (2000), 22-49, offers an overview of the reception of Theocritus in Portugal, although he does not mention Sérgio's version.
[398] Morais (2017a), 127. By contrast, for Pattoni (2012), they represent those intellectuals who, isolated in "un'eterea repubblica delle lettere" did not take on political responsibilities.

near the same cave where Antigone will be buried (pp. 88-9). Like Antigone, she was an innocent girl, whose destiny was to die before her time.[399]

Furthermore, they evoke the (p. 91) "valor da liberdade" ("value of freedom") and condemn those in power and their collaborators (p. 91): "maldita raça a dos tiranos … como a dos que querem a tirania, e a dos que vivem bem debaixo dela!" ("cursed breed, that of tyrants … as of those who want tyranny and live well under tyranny!"), thus showing that they are aware of the despotism and injustices that the people of Thebes are enduring. Because of the learned context and self-conscious praise of freedom, Sérgio's shepherds could represent the elite and intellectuals who confined themselves to an "idyllic solitude", thus avoiding civic responsibility, rather than the oppressed members of the opposition.[400]

This bucolic scene is interrupted by the appearance of the soldiers bringing Antigone. In order to silence the opposition, Creon has ordered them to isolate Antigone in this idyllic place, so that she cannot represent a danger any more. Before being led to the cave, Antigone is relieved: she knows that she has done what she had to (p. 101: "penso que o que tinha a fazer ficou já feito"), like Hasenclever's Antigone, and enjoys the last moments of passive acceptance and inertia. Like Sophocles' Antigone (808), she gives her last goodbye to the light and welcomes the freedom offered by death (p. 106): "Libertas-me de uma vida que vale mil mortes … Escravo e tirano - quem sabe? - dás-me a Liberdade que não tens para ti" ("You free me from a life worth a thousand deaths ... Slave and tyrant - who knows? – you give me the Freedom you do not have for yourself"). Her last words recall the topical opposition between freedom and slavery. They seem to imply pessimistically that, for people living under a tyranny, the only way to obtain freedom is death. At the same time, they reveal that tyranny, despite its absurd claims, cannot impose obedience at all costs nor can it deprive people of their ultimate freedom – the freedom of conscience.

Antigone's death does indeed provoke a change and instils doubts in the soldiers who executed Creon's orders, whose tryanny has only led from one crime to the other (p. 107: "de crime em crime"). One of the officers refuses to execute further

[399] According to Morais (2017a), 127, this could be a reference to the fourth *stasimon* of Sophocles' *Antigone* (88-9).
[400] As suggested by Pattoni (2012).

orders and reveals that there are many others who have "opened their eyes" and want to vindicate freedom. Even the most faithful general, Orthagoras, realises that (p. 113) "No despotismo, uma violência força logo a outra, e não têm fim …" ("in despotism, one violence immediately provokes another; and they have no end …"). He thus retreats to pursue his personal interests and realises that tyranny is only transitory (p. 117: "o despotismo, por natureza, é um recurso transitório e rápido"). For Orthagoras, this realisation only comes at the very end, once the Messenger announces that the popular uprising, led by Haemon himself, has been successful and Creon has been forced to leave the country. Orthagoras opportunistically hopes that the liberating forces will understand that he has simply executed the orders (p. 118): "Se são democratas, hão-de ser fiéis aos seus princípios, hão-de ser tolearntes, hão de ser liberais …" ("If they are Democrats, they will be faithful to their principles, they will be tolerant, they will be liberals ...").

By contrast with Hasenclever's version, Sergio's play does indeed end with a scene of hopeful reconciliation between the different factions.[401] Antigone commits suicide and Haemon hangs himself beside her, as happens in Sophocles' tragedy. However, the final words, spoken by Critoboulus, express Sergio's hope in a better future as well as the wish to "be inspired by the sanctity of Antigone" (p. 122: "Ela, enfim, nos salvará a todos, se souber inspirer-se na santidade de Antígona!"). He encourages the people to swear that they will make "o futuro melhor que o passado, para que a tirania não se erga mais – não, nunca mais!" ("the future better than the past, so that tyranny will never rise up, no, never again!").

In Sérgio's play, democracy prevails at the cost of the life of Antigone, who is elevated to a saint and emblematic heroine: her exemplary sacrifice brings peace and conciliation. Whereas Hasenclever emphasised the limits of Antigone's rebellion and expressed his pessimism towards the actions of the crowd, Sérgio highlighted the effectiveness of a popular revolt led by a charismatic leader. His play reveals that rebellion for civil rights and freedom cannot be eradicated easily. This (p. 113) "ancient whim of freedom" ("antiga mania da liberdade"), has strong roots in the human soul ("tem fundas raízes na alma humana …").

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[401] See Pattoni (2010) on the influence of Aeschylus' *Eumenides* on this final scene of reconciliation in Sérgio's *Antigone*.

4. Conclusions

Sérgio's version is a particular noteworthy example of political reception of *Antigone* in a particular country in a relevant historical moment, under Salazar's dictatorship. The author exploited the themes of protest of the ancient play and transformed the Antigone story into a socio-political pamphlet which condemns the opportunism, violence, and tyranny of the dictatorship, and encourages steadfast resistance against the arbitrary use of power. His *Antigone* has the evident political and pedagogic aim to inspire rebellion against an oppressive dictatorship.

By displaying its pedagogic and political aims, Sérgio's version distances itself from the original. In Sophocles, the issues raised by the tragedy remain open-ended and enigmatic, and belong to a mythical, distant world. The sufferings of Creon and Antigone might have a didactic impact; yet, Sophocles' *Antigone* gives no definitive lessons and ultimate answers.[402] By contrast, in transposing *Antigone* to the contemporary reality of Portugal, Sérgio attempted to offer a clear teaching and preached the necessity to rebel against despotic repression.

What distinguishes this *Antigone* from other political appropriations of the ancient myth is the direct allusion to the contemporary political context of Portugal in these years. In his *Antigone*, Sérgio introduced many innovations to the core of the traditional story and created analogies with the contemporary reality, often alluding to the specific context of Portugal in the 1930s. The political themes inherent to the original are thus historicised and contextualised in specific ways by Sérgio in order to voice his critique of the dictatorship.

Sérgio's appropriations of the *Antigone* show the malleability of the ancient tragedy, repeatedly revitalised in response to different socio-political situations in which the heroine's militant and political resistance against tyranny is meaningful. The author does not only condemn tyranny, but also the supporters of dictatorship – the spies, informers, the network of propagandistic organisations, and festivals, which serve to distract the people and impose the dominant ideology. As in Hasenclever, Antigone is given a voice of political protest and rebellion and dies as a martyr. Unlike

[402] See section 1.4. of this thesis on Sophocles' *Antigone*.

in Hasenclever, the sacrifice of Sérgio's heroine is useful, and grants the rise of a new, ideal society of freedom and justice. By appropriating the ancient myth in this way, Sérgio transforms Sophocles' *Antigone* into an emblematic figure of conscientious resistance. His *Antigone* thus represents an important step in the process of politicisation of the ancient myth.

3.3. The Second World War

The Second World War represents a decisive moment for the politicisation of Sophocles' *Antigone*. During these turbulent years, political fact gave the *Antigone* a great contemporary and political relevance. Despite the unique circumstances that affected the theatre production and the freedom of theatre playwrights, forced to conform to the stringent Nazi-Vichy censorship,[403] *Antigone* was performed 150 times between 1939 and 1944.[404] Steiner refers to the years 1943 and 1944 as a period of "Antigone-fever" and Fraigneau speaks of the "crise d'antigonnité" in French theatres during the German Occupation of France (1940-44).[405] In Nazi Germany *Antigone* was arguably the most popular classical work.[406] It was even performed during the months which preceded the closure of all theatres in the Reich (August 1944).[407] The Nazi regime favoured the re-purposing of a classical, heroic drama on the stage, despite its subversive potential, in the effort to preserve German-Western culture against "barbarian" influences from the East.[408]

Therefore, in this period, performances of the play more explicitly became a political act – but not necessarily an act of resistance.[409] The politicisation of *Antigone* was twofold: it served both the intellectual resistance and the ideological instrumentalisation of the Nazis. If Antigone's act against absolute power could be interpreted as an example of civil disobedience against the Third Reich, Hegel's assertion of the law of the state was also congenial to German nationalism. In particular,

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[403] See Bradby (1984), 16-7. On censorship in this period see Pickering (1985); Weinstein (1989); Lohse (2006), 160-63. See also Fischer-Lichte (2008).
[404] See Lohse (2006), 151; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 168. In this period, Antigone was associated with Jeanne d'Arc because of her rebellion and vocation to sacrifice, and this association helped to set the "appropriateness" of *Antigone*. In the context of German censorship and Vichy propaganda, the character of Jeanne d'Arc became officially accepted: she pleased both the French and the Germans, as a symbol of humiliated France on the one hand, and as a symbol of patriotism on the other, embodying national integrity, courage, and sacrifice. See Flügge (1982) i. 256.
[405] Steiner (1984), 108; Fraigneau (1944), cited in Witt (2001), 219.
[406] See the list of *Antigones* performed in Nazi Germany in Flashar (2009), 164-68; 395, endnote 23; Castellari (2011), 158, endnote 49; Pöggeler (2004), 112; Fischer-Lichte (2010), 338; Fleming (2015), 179, endnote 4; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 143-81.
[407] The closure, ordered by Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, followed the attempted attack on the life of Hitler by Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg on 20 July 1944. See Flashar (2009), 165; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 168.
[408] See Ziolkowski (2000), 555.
[409] See Fischer-Lichte (2017), 169.

Hölderlin's *Antigone* was frequently performed in support of Hitler's nationalistic propaganda in this period.[410] Although Hölderlin neither presupposed the priority of Germany over Greece as the leader of the West, nor implied that "Greekness" was inherent in German culture or the German race, his play and his "patriotic" idea of *das Vaterländische* were appropriated by the Nazis for their proclamation of a racial kinship between Greeks and Germans.

Hölderlin's *Antigone* was staged for the first time since 1922 at the *Burgtheater* in Vienna in 1940.[411] The director Lothar Müthel emphasised the sacral and ritualistic dimension of the play, central to Hölderlin's translation, rather than the political dimension. The costumes, stylised movements, and ritual music, all contributed to depoliticise the play. Instead of viewing Antigone as a defiant heroine rebelling against the *polis*, Müthel treated *Antigone* as a sublime work outside of time, deprived of any political meaning and greatly distant from the present.

A different approach was adopted by Karlheinz Stroux in his *Antigone* (1940), which is representative of the artists' ways of promoting a political discourse through the use of ancient Greek tragedy in this period.[412] The stage designs, created by Traugott Müller, reminded critics of an oriental or pre-Hellenic culture rather than classical Greece.[413] Here, the "racial kinship" was inverted:[414] Antigone wore a white dress and resembled a statue of classical Greece whereas Creon was dressed as an oriental ruler and barbarian. Although liable to be criticised or censored, the play was tolerated by National Socialist critics and justified on the ground that it was a "true" representation of the original and corresponded to the heroic type of drama favoured by the regime. The mystic stage and stylised acting did not prompt a direct identification with the story, and allowed the author to discuss indirectly contemporary political issues.

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[410] On Hölderlin's translation see section 2.2.1. of this thesis. In 1943 the Hölderlin society was founded in Stuttgart in occasion of the 100th anniversary of Hölderlin's death and Goebbels was appointed "honorary patron of the Society"; Savage (2008), 5.
[411] See Lohse (2006), 151-86; Flashar (2009), 167; Castellari (2011), 158.
[412] On other "subversive" *Antigones* performed under the Third Reich, see Steiner (1984), 189; Pöggeler (2004), 112; Flashar (2009), 164-68.
[413] See contemporary reviews in Flashar (2009), 166; Fischer-Lichte (2010), 343-44; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 171-79.
[414] Fischer-Lichte (2017), 177. See illustration 6.

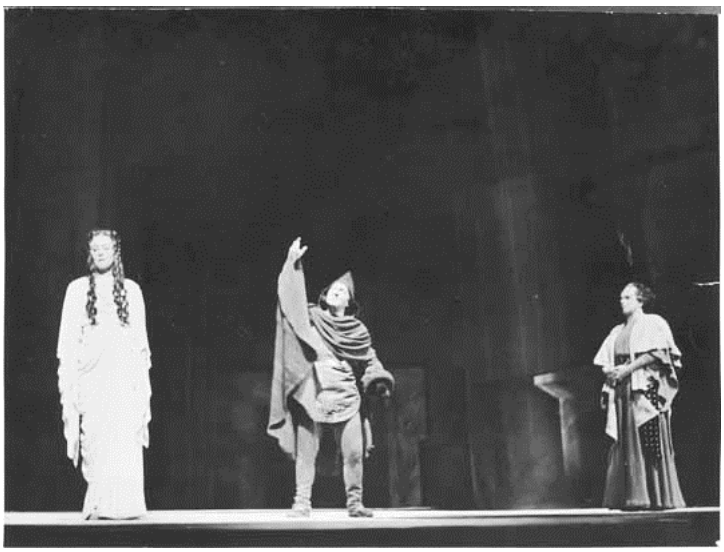

Fig. 6. Karl Heinz Stroux's *Antigone*, with Marianne Hoppe as Antigone and Walter Franck as Creon. Fischer-Lichte (2017), 174.

The variety of interpretations of *Antigone* in this crucial historical period demonstrates the power of current ideology and politics in shaping the understanding of the Sophoclean tragedy. Although the performance of Greek dramas was approved in Nazi Germany, plays either exploited the ancient myth to criticise indirectly the current regime (Stroux's *Antigone*) or were depoliticised and deprived of any political reference (Müthel's *Antigone*). A similar, "apolitical" approach was adopted by German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

3.3.1. Heidegger and the Ode to Man (1935-1943)

Heidegger was fascinated in particular by Sophocles' choral 'Ode to Man', which had a central role in his ontology and poetics as illustrated in his *Introduction to Metaphysics*. Presented as a lecture course at the University of Freiburg in 1935, Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics* was only published in 1953 and offered an extended reading of the first *stasimon* of Sophocles' *Antigone*. In the 1953 publication, Heidegger conflated his earlier interpretations of the Chorus given in 1935 with those developed in 1942-43, in a lecture course devoted to Hölderlin's *Der Ister*, which was published in 1984.[415] The 1935 lecture course was never published, but the translation of the ode is preserved in a letter that Heidegger sent to Karl Jasper in 1935.[416] It is thus possible to compare Heidegger's earlier and later translation of the Sophoclean Chorus. Despite his repeated engagement with Sophocles' *Antigone*, Heidegger nowhere explicitly wrote a theory of tragedy.[417]

In his reading, Heidegger presented the conflicts of the play in distinctly abstract terms and ignored the context of the 'Ode to Man' within Sophocles' play. The political potential of *Antigone* was neglected in favour of a philosophical exploration of what is the nature of "being" and existence experienced by humankind. Such "depoliticisation" of the *Antigone* had indeed political consequences. Critics have brought attention to the political significance of Heidegger's interpretation and the changes from his earlier to his later (post-Nazism) interpretation.[418] A member of the Nazi party, Heidegger was the first National Socialist rector of the University of Freiburg between 1933 and 1935. Soon after delivering his course on the Metaphysics, Heidegger resigned his post as rector. He nonetheless supported the regime until the end of the war.[419] After 1945, he never explicitly condemned the regime nor

[415] On Heidegger, Hölderlin, and Sophoclean tragedy see especially Fóti (1999); Pöggeler (2004); Billings (2014); Billings and Leonard (2015). On Heidegger and the Greeks see Most (2002); White (2005).
[416] This is reported by Pöggeler (2004), 134-35; for the 1953 publication, see Steiner (1984), 174-77.
[417] See Fleming (2015), 184.
[418] On the political implications of Heidegger's reading of *Antigone* see Geiman (2001); Fleming (2015). A counter-argument is offered by Young (1997), 115-16; 124-25.
[419] See Thomson (2005), 31. See also Young (1997); Pöggeler (2004), 164; Bernasconi (2013), for an account of Heidegger's relationship with Nazism.

acknowledged its atrocities. His controversial politics and nationalist agenda surface in his interpretation of the Sophoclean *stasimon* as well as in his later philosophy.
In his philosophical attempt to define the essence of "being" and answer the question "why are there beings?",[420] Heidegger turned to the first *stasimon* of the *Antigone*. In the section of his *Introduction to Metaphysics* devoted to the polarity of "being and thinking", Heidegger offered a translation and close analysis of the Sophoclean *stasimon*. In commenting on the first two lines, Heidegger explained the meaning of the Greek word *deinon* (pp. 158-59):

> Das δεινόν ist das Furchtbare im Sinne des überwältigenden Waltens, das in gleicher Weise den panischen Schrecken, die wahre Angst erzwingt wie die gesammelte, in sich schwingende, verschwiegene Scheu. Das Gewaltige, das Überwältigende ist der Wesenscharakter des Waltens selbst … Zum anderen aber bedeutet δεινόν das Gewaltige im Sinne dessen, der die Gewalt braucht, nicht nur über Gewalt verfügt, sondern gewaltig-tätig ist, insofern ihm das Gewaltbrauchen der Grundzug seines Tuns nicht nur, sondern seines Daseins ist.
>
> (pp. 166-67): The *deinon* is the terrible in the sense of the overwhelming sway, which induces panicked fear, true anxiety, as well as collected, inwardly reverberating, reticent awe. The violent, the overwhelming is the essential character of the sway itself … But on the other hand, *deinon* means the violent in the sense of one who needs to use violence – and does not just have violence at his disposal but is violence-doing, insofar as using violence is the basic trait not just of his doing but of his Dasein.

Therefore, humanity is, "in one word", *deinotaton*, "the uncanniest" (*das Unheimlichste*), both because it belongs to Being and because of its intrinsic violence

[420] This question, according to Heidegger, is the "most originary of questions" and opens up what he calls the "human *Dasein*", the being for whom "Being" (in the sense of "beingness", "to be in being"), is in question; Heidegger (2014), 4. Page numbers refer to Heidegger (1983), German edition, and Heidegger (2014), English edition.

and use of violence against the overwhelming.[421] In Heidegger's reading, man inevitably is affected by this condition of "uncanniness" as soon as he "exists" and "is": it is (p. 168) "the basic trait of the human essence". It is not clear whether Heidegger was thinking about the violence committed by National Socialism. He did not provide specific examples and highlighted that also in the Sophoclean *stasimon* there are no (p. 166) "present-at hand exemplars of humanity" nor "glorified personality". It seems that Heidegger was here referring to "perennial dimensions of human actions", rather than glorifying the Nazis' "eagerness to commit violence".[422] His "silence" about the actual violence and terror of the Nazi regime is indeed striking within this context – especially in the 1953 post-war publication.

According to Heidegger, man is not only the "most uncanny" (*un-heimlich*, which is based on the root *Heim*, "home"). Due to the inherent contradictions and limits of his being, he is also the (p. 181) "un-homeliest" (*a-polis*). He is thus "the uncanniest of the uncanny" (*das Unheimlichste des Unheimlichen*), as it surfaces in Heidegger's interpretation of lines 360 and 370 of Sophocles' ode. His translation of line 360 remains almost unchanged in the 1935, 1942, and 1953 versions (p. 156):

> Überall hinausfahrend unterwegs erfahrungslos ohne Ausweg
> kommt er zum Nichts.
>
> (p. 164) Everywhere trying out, underway; untried, with no way out
> He comes to Nothing.[423]

However, in the original, "to nothing" goes with "that is to come" and the word ἄπορος ("without resource") merely reinforces the notion that man is, in fact, παντοπόρος ("cunning", "skilful") in all. Heidegger perhaps intentionally followed Hölderlin's mistranslation: "Allbewandert / unbewandert. Zu nichts kommt er." ("All-travelled /

[421] See Fóti (1999), 167-68; 172-74; Schmidt (2015), 64; Fleming (2015), 187, on the ambivalent connotations of *deinon*.
[422] Fried and Polt (2014), xix.
[423] For Heidegger's translation of these lines in 1935, see Pöggeler (2004), 135; for his translation in 1942, see Heidegger (1996), 73.

Untravelled. He comes to nothing").[424] In addition, he compared the apparent oxymoron of line 360 to line 370, in which man is said to be ὑψίπολις, yet at the same time ἄπολις, translated as follows in both the 1942 lecture course and the 1953 edition (p. 157):

> Hochuberragend die Stätte, verlustig der Stätte
> Ist er, dem immer das Unseiende seiend
> Der Wagnis zugunsten.
>
> (p. 169) Towering high above the site, forfeiting the site
> Is he for whom non-beings always are
> For the sake of risk.[425]

If compared with the 1935 version, reported by Pöggeler, it is possible to detect some changes in the translation of these lines:

> Hochragend im Staate – verlustig des Staates
> Geht er, dem das Unseiende seiend
> Umwillen des Wagens.[426]
>
> Towering in the state – forfeiting the state
> Goes he, for whom non-beings are
> For the sake of risk.

Whereas in both in the 1942 lecture devoted to *Der Ister* and in his 1953 publication of the *Metaphysics* Heidegger translated *polis* as "site" (*Stätte*), in the 1935 lecture course he had translated the Greek word *polis* as "state" (*Staate*). In preparing the

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[424] Hölderlin (2000), 118. Pöggeler (2004), 136-37, suggests that Heidegger's translation was influenced by Hölderlin. Brunck's English commentary (1830), already used by Hegel, proposed a different text.
[425] For the translation in his course lecture on *The Ister*, see Heidegger (1996), 79. By contrast, Hölderlin (2001), 81, translated: "Hochstädtisch kommt, unstädtisch, / Zu nichts er" ("In high civility uncivil he comes / to nothing").
[426] Pöggeler (2004), 135.

Metaphysics for the 1953 edition, Heidegger underlined that (pp. 169-70) "one translates *polis* as state (*Staat*) and city-state (*Stadtstaat*); this does not capture the entire sense. Rather, *polis* is the name for the site (*Stätte*)".[427] The idea that "the *polis* cannot be determined 'politically'" and "is not a 'political' concept" already surfaced in Heidegger's 1942 lecture on *Der Ister*.[428] In his discussion of the Sophoclean *stasimon*, Heidegger claimed that the *polis* "is the open site of that fitting destining [*Schickung*] from out of which all human relations towards beings … are determined".[429] Moreover, he compared the *polis* to a "pole" or "swirl" [*Wirbel*], "in which and around which everything turns".[430] The image of a pole constantly oscillating and whirling conveys the idea of an uncanny entity, both fixed and in motion, present and absent.

This idea is reiterated in the 1953 publication, in which Heidegger claims that *polis* is (pp. 169-70) "the ground and place of human *Dasein* itself, the spot where all these routes cross, the *polis*".[431] According to Hegel, the gods, temples, priests, celebrations, poets etc. belong first to this "site of history" rather than to the *polis*, and they are not primarily political. Rather, the (p. 170) "violence-doers … become those who rise high in historical Beings as creators, as doers. Rising high in the site of history, they also become *apolis*, without city and site, lone-some, un-canny".[432] Precisely because they are the "creators" (*Schaffende*) of all that belongs to the *polis*, men are unable to find their own *polis*.

Instead of characterising the *polis* as a political entity, as he had done in 1935, in the 1953 version Heidegger associated it with a particular place or site of belonging (p. 170) "within which and as which Being-here is as historical [*geschichtliches*]". The change in the translation from *Staate* to *Stätte* reveals that Heidegger, in 1953, was advocating a departure from politics and was promoting the idea of a cohesive, originary community. This local and ethical community or heritage can be interpreted

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[427] Heidegger (1983), 161: "Man übersetzt *polis* durch Staat und Stadtstaat; dies trifft nicht den vollen Sinn. Eher heißt *polis* die Stätte, das Da, worin und als welches das Da-sein als geschichtliches ist."
[428] Heidegger (1996), 80.
[429] Heidegger (1996), 82.
[430] Heidegger (1996), 81.
[431] Heidegger (1983), 161: "der Grund und Ort des Daseins des Menschen selbst, die Kreuzungsstelle aller dieser Bahnen, die *polis*".
[432] See discussion in Pöggeler (2004), 138; Withy (2015), 149-51.

as "the existential matrix for man",[433] and strays close to the ideal of a German Nazi community. Against the (p. 41) "frenzy of unchained technology",[434] Heidegger was preaching the existence of a transcendent and apolitical site of dwelling. Furthermore, he was adumbrating the possibility of a new political program based on a "new socialist form of German nationalism" against "the ills of modernity".[435] Such insistence on the existence of an apolitical community closer to Being thus reflects "the aestheticization of the political common in right-wing and fascist language".[436]

At the end of his *Metaphysics*, Heidegger also mentioned (p. 222) "the inner truth and greatness [*innere Wahrheit und Größe*] of this movement [National Socialism] (namely the encounter between global technology and humanism)".[437] Although the second part of the sentence appeared in parentheses in the 1953 version, which should have meant that he had added this controversial phrase in 1935 (as Heidegger himself explained in his prefatory note of the 1953 edition), scholars have shown that this passage was added later, when Heidegger was preparing the text for the 1953 edition.[438] Far from being an attempt to condemn the violence of the movement, this assertion, together with Heidegger's anti-political reading of *Antigone*, was an explicit attempt to vindicate the "inner truth and essence" of the Nazi movement, developed from the encounter between *techne* and the modern man – no matter if it proved detrimental in practice. It also integrated Heidegger's interpretation of the Ode and his quest for "being" within the intellectual and political context of Nazi Germany. Heidegger's continuous insistence on the special spiritual affinity between the Germans and the idealised Greeks, ideologically favoured by the Nazis, highlighted the "privileged" closeness to being and authenticity experienced by the Germans.[439]

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[433] Steiner (1984), 175.
[434] On Heidegger's discussion of *techne* as characteristic trait of the violent (*deinon*) Being, see Geiman (2001).
[435] Leonard (2015), 71.
[436] Fleming (2015), 191.
[437] In this final part of the *Metaphysics*, Heidegger is addressing the question of "values", explaining that "history is nothing but the actualization of values".
[438] Pöggeler (1987), 278; Wolin (1993), 188; Fried and Polt (2014), xx-i.
[439] See Fleming (2015), 182-83. See Heidegger (1990), 63: "I am thinking of the special inner relationship of the German language with the language of the Greeks and their thinking." This extract is part of his remark in the *Spiegel* interview. See Fleming (2015), 193, endnote 19.

In emphasising the abstract and universal qualities of the *Antigone* and incorporating his humanistic view of existence and being within the ideals of National Socialism, Heidegger represented the Greeks as "an idealized projection of specifically German virtues".[440] Rather than embracing the political interpretation of *Antigone* dominant in the twentieth century, he treated this Chorus as a philosophical, apolitical document. Such depoliticisation and decontextualisation were not incidental but rather reflected Heidegger's attempt at vindication of Nazi ideology after the end of the war.

However, Sophocles' *Antigone* does portray the rebellion of Antigone against Creon's authority. The play's subversive potential resurfaces in a controversial and apparently political version of the ancient tragedy – the *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh.

3.3.2. Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944)

One of the most notable examples of the political reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the twentieth century is the controversial adaptation by Jean Anouilh. Together with Brecht's adaptation, Anouilh's version represents the culmination of the process through which *Antigone* enters the realm of politics. Anouilh's *Antigone* had a major impact in later contexts and has continued to fascinate modern readers and playwrights today. Recent Georgian, US, and Egyptian productions of *Antigone* have used Anouilh's *Antigone* rather than the Sophoclean original as the "primary source" for their own twenty-first century adaptations.[441]

Written during the German Occupation of France and approved by the German censors as early as 1942, Anouilh's *Antigone* only premiered in Paris in February 1944, a few months before the liberation by the allied forces.[442] It was first staged at the Théâtre de l'Atelier on the Right Bank in Paris – the same theatre where Cocteau's *Antigone* had been performed twenty two years earlier – in front of a mixed audience of German officers, collaborationists, and pro-Resistance fighters.[443] The play was an

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[440] Most (2002), 95.
[441] See Mee and Foley (2011), 32-3.
[442] As Anouilh (1987), 165, attests. See also Flügge (1982) i. 44; Flashar (2009), 172. It would have been interesting to know the reaction of public and critics had the play been staged in 1942.
[443] André Barsacq directed the premiere, which starred Anouilh's wife, Monelle Valentin, in the role of Antigone. By "collaboration" is meant the political co-operation between Germany and France during Second World War.

instant success: in his *Memoir*, Anouilh documents that the theatre was crowded, every night thereafter, by both French and German audiences, including German soldiers and officers.[444] It ran unbroken throughout the crucial year 1944, and it was then restaged 645 times until 1945.[445] The number of articles on the play (nineteen in February alone, eleven in March), reviewed both in the collaborationist press as well as in Resistance papers, was also outstanding, considering the restrictions of censorship and technical problems due to the time of war.[446] The play was successfully produced after the end on the war in 1947, 1949, 1950, and 1953.[447]

The specific historical context, as well as Anouilh's controversial representation of Creon and Antigone, gave the play an immediate political relevance. In order to avoid reprisal, Anouilh claimed political ignorance and declared that he was a "bête de theatre", only concerned with theatre rather than political reality.[448] Given the evasive (or simply non-existent) comments of the author as well as the ambiguities of his play, the political orientation of Anouilh's *Antigone* has remained controversial. At the moment of its production, the play has received "all sorts of political labels",[449] from fascist to pro-Resistant and collaborationist; after the war, Anouilh's *Antigone* was hailed as an allegory of French Resistance. Since the 1950s, this "pro-Resistance" interpretation, enhanced by post-war reception and criticism, has been the dominant interpretation and has been consistently accepted by Anglophone readers.[450]

Only recently, contemporary critics have re-historicised Anouilh's play in the immediacy of its historical and ideological context and have detected a different trajectory of interpretation. In particular, Witt and Fleming argued that the vocabulary and register of Anouilh's Antigone can be understood as representative of Nazi ideology and her insistence on "purity" complicit in racial doctrines and acceptable

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[444] Anouilh (1987), 167.
[445] Flashar (2009), 173.
[446] Fleming (2006), 167. See Flügge (1982) i. 272-74; 313, for an overview of the reviews in the official press in 1944 and after the liberation. Flügge (1982) ii. 47-72, offers a comprehensive collection of contemporary reviews.
[447] See Freeman in Anouilh (2000), xlix.
[448] Witt (2001), 190.
[449] Weinstein (1989), 141. In this period, everyone was very much attentive to political overtones and "eager to find political messages on one end of the spectrum or the other"; Witt (2001), 190-91.
[450] Fleming (2006), 167.

ideas of modern tragedy.[451] Given the fact that there are no overt political references but rather less direct allusions, it remains nonetheless difficult to assess whether a political reading was intended, how sensible the author was to the political dimension, and whether he had a clear agenda in mind when writing his play. This uncertainty is complicated by the fact that the aesthetics of Anouilh's *Antigone* is inevitably influenced by current ideologies and by the necessity for playwrights to align themselves to the stringent censorship of the time.

In this chapter, I shall explore the specific ideological context in which Anouilh's play was written, along with the play's critical reception in contemporary reviews. In order to understand the polarised interpretations of the play advanced by critics and the exceptional storm of controversy raised by the play, it is necessary to analyse Anouilh's presentation of Antigone and Creon as well as the crucial divergences of Anouilh's *Antigone* from the original. Through a close analysis of the text and historical context in which it was written, I shall show that, in reworking the Antigone story and reconfiguring its main motifs, Anouilh highlighted the open-textured and ideologically ambiguous nature of the play. As a reaction to and consequence of the peculiar historical circumstances in which the play was written and performed, Anouilh attempted to "maintain a morally neutral stance".[452] By highlighting the ambiguities and contradictions of Antigone's and Creon's motivations, as well as the complex irony and self-refuting nature of the tragedy, Anouilh shifted the focus onto the personal and psychological (rather than the political) conflicts of the characters. The disappearance of the gods and the desacralisation of the tragedy also point to philosophical, cynical, and nihilistic questions − about the absurdity of human existence and of the whole tragic process, presented as inevitable. Anouilh's *Antigone* might well "reverberate with a number of themes dear to both the traditional European right and to fascism", as Witt argues.[453] However, it is difficult to attach notions of fascism (its brutality, violence, and totalitarianism) to artists – such as Anouilh – who actually did not engage actively with the politics of fascism.[454] His

[451] See Witt (1993); Fleming (2006).
[452] Freeman (2000), xlvi.
[453] Witt (1993), 65.
[454] The only "political" act of Anouilh was the public defence of the poet Robert Brasillach, a renowned fascist who wrote in anti-semitic journals and who was convicted after the end of the war. Anouilh led the petition to prevent his execution of Brasillach in 1945, and associated his death with Antigone's

Antigone, too, is not overtly political nor does it preach a clear political agenda – like Sophocles' *Antigone*. Because the original itself does not offer a unique, one-sided interpretation, it can give rise to different, polarised readings.[455] The ambiguity and polyphony of the original particularly suited Anouilh's intentionally ambiguous representation of the tragic conflict. And yet, precisely the ambiguities of Anouilh's apparently subversive *Antigone,* its cynical and ironic nature, enhanced the variety of political interpretations of the play and granted its endurance to the present day as well as its establishment as a canonical, political drama of resistance.

1. Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*: the Context and "la Bataille d'*Antigone*"[456]

When Anouilh was writing his adaptation, Sophocles' *Antigone* was extremely popular and successfully performed elsewhere both in Nazi Germany and in Nazi-occupied France. Arthur Honegger's opera (1927) was revived in 1941, 1943, and 1944, just before Anouilh's play.[457] *Antigone* was staged by the Groupe de Théâtre Antique in 1942, and Garnier's *Antigone ou la pieté* (1580) was revived in 1944 and 1945.[458] When first performed in 1944, at the height of the Occupation, Anouilh's *Antigone* provoked a variety of antithetical interpretations. Both the Germans and French collaborators had different and equally plausible ways of interpreting the play, either as failure of resistant defiance to tyranny, or as eulogy of Antigone's revolt. Perhaps surprisingly, the play was immediately praised by the official press and accepted almost uniformly in collaborationist, fascist, and pro-German circles whereas it was rejected by pro-resistance writers. The first review in the *Lettres françaises* is exemplary of the hostile attitude of the underground press. The author, Claude Roy, complained: "L'Antigone qu'on nous propose n'est pas notre Antigone, la seule, la vraie."[459] Anouilh's Antigone acts for herself ("pour moi") and not for the community

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sacrifice. Like him, many writers and intellectuals suspected of having supported Vichy and the Nazi occupiers were prosecuted and condemned of collaborationism. See Vandromme (1965), 180; Weinstein (1989), 131-32; Witt (1993), 61.

[455] On Sophocles' *Antigone,* see section 1.4. of this thesis.

[456] Such a designation of the debate on Anouilh's *Antigone* is given by Flügge (1982) i. 271, in reference to the review from *La Gerbe* abstracted in Flügge (1982) ii. 66.

[457] Flashar (2009), 172. On Honegger, see section 3.2.2. of this thesis.

[458] See Steiner (1984), 138-40.

[459] Roy (1944), "Notre Antigone et la leur"; cited by Witt (2001), 228.

("pour nous"): she does not represent the traditional model of defiant resistance to tyranny.[460] According to another contemporary critic, Antigone's death "n'est pas l'affirmation d'un héroïsme, mais un refus et un suicide".[461]

By contrast, collaborationist critics positively regarded Anouilh's Antigone as a "fascist heroine", embodying the ideology of racial purity and superiority. The emphasis on words such as *pureté*, *grandeur*, and "youthful vigour", recurrent in fascist propaganda,[462] was interpreted as a clear reference to racial doctrines and fascist aesthetic of "purification" and "cult of the youth". The enthusiastic review by collaborationist critic Alain Laubreaux, which appeared on the collaborationist journal *Je suis partout*, is symptomatic. Laubreaux described Anouilh as "admirateur naïf et fémelin du Führer et de son génie".[463] Although he praised the magnificent revolt of Antigone, which embodies the revolt of "purity" against the mediocrity of men,[464] he also emphasised that Antigone acts irresponsibly: her revolt only leads to "disorder and suicide".[465] Similarly, collaborationist critic Charles Méré described Antigone as a troublemaker, "whose revolt produces only anarchy, disaster, and death".[466] Only when Antigone dies does life in Thebes return to normality, thus suggesting that France, too, will only find peace after the cessation of the Resistance. By displaying such a pointless rebellion, Anouilh was portraying the uselessness and failure of French Resistance, which was only bringing anarchy and chaos.

Rather than with Antigone, collaborationist commentators sided with Creon: "Créon avait raison".[467] He was likened to the head of the Vichy regime Philippe Pétain (or his Prime Minister Pierre Laval), who assumed a personal regime as *Chef*

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[460] This model was prevalent in France from the twentieth century, which saw the Dreyfus affair as well as the First World War. In the twentieth century, artists could not read Sophocles' tragedy "sans percevoir en filigrane ces références politiques"; Fraisse (1966), 270.
[461] Cited by Flügge (1982) i. 302.
[462] Witt (1993), 51. On the purification theme in fascism see also Paxton (1972). Louis Barsacq, in an interview for the newspaper *Au Pilori* (1944), cited by Flügge (1982) i. 264, also emphasised the *pureté* of Antigone. The director André Barsacq (1947), 157-58, described Antigone as "tragédie de la *pureté*"; cited by Flügge (1982) i. 262. The interpretation of Anouilh's Antigone as "fascist" heroine is supported by contemporary scholars Witt (1993) and Fleming (2006).
[463] Cited by Flügge (1982) i. 302.
[464] Laubreaux, 'Du théâtre !', *Je suis partout*, 18 February 1944. Alain Laubreaux was an influential critic during the Occupation. His enthusiastic review of *Antigone* appeared in the same journal edition together with an article against the "terrorism" of French Resistance. See Flügge (1982) i. 253; 278-79.
[465] Laubreaux cited by Freeman (2000), xlvii.
[466] Méré cited by Freeman (2000), xlvii.
[467] Variot (1944), cited by Flügge (1982) i. 285. See also Clémenti (1944); Marcel (1944), cited by Beugnot (1977), 32.

de l'Etat français on 10 July 1940.[468] Until the end, the king of Thebes, a sensible ruler forced to compromise, tries to save Antigone and is torn by the painful ingratitude of his office.[469] His decision, although extreme and irreversible, is inevitable and dictated by the same responsibilities and difficulties faced by the head of state in governing his country. Creon's position was thus enriched by admissible reasons and, to a certain extent, justified. He was seen by those critics in a more favourable light, as the real hero of the play, ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of his country.

Precisely because of Creon's sympathetic portrayal – opposed to Antigone's pointless rebellion – the play was rejected by sections of the Resistance.[470] French critic Gaillard accused Anouilh of having created in Creon a dictator for his fascist play.[471] Pro-Resistance critics reviled Anouilh's Creon as collaborationist, *le fasciste Créon*, and warned the public: "n'y allez pas, c'est une pièce nazie".[472] That *Antigone* "was serving the Nazi occupiers and Vichy regime" would also be proved by the fact that Anouilh contributed thirteen journalistic articles to the collaborationist press and wrote for German-sponsored papers, such as *La Gerbe* and *Aujourd'hui*.[473]

Anouilh's articles for collaborationist journals displayed a tempered monarchism, though veiled by the same irony and ambiguity which re-emerges in the *Antigone*. For example, in an article, Anouilh claimed that he would have liked to live under the monarchy of Louis XV, explaining that only under monarchy, in the process of discovering it, it is possible to experience "la liberté jeune, la notion de liberté encore lourde d'espoir, le mot liberté avant son usure".[474] In another article, he expressed the rather controversial opinion that the French Revolution was responsible for the replacement of a healthy tradition (*la saine tradition*) with a new hierarchy based on money (*l'argent*). According to him, youths should be the agents of a change and they should have "l'effronterie d'apparaitre sur la scène du monde aussi purs".[475]

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[468] Freeman (2000), xlviii. See Cairns (2016), 135; endnote 146.
[469] Fraisse (1966), 279.
[470] See Freeman (2000), xlviix-lviii; Flashar (2009), 170; Deppman (2012), 523-24.
[471] Gaillard (1944), "L'Antigone du désespoir", *La Pensée*, cited by Fleming (2006), 178.
[472] Laurent (1944), cited by Flügge (1982) i. 280; Dussane (1951), 127. Anouilh (1987), 166, documents that, after the liberation of Paris, the clandestine journal *Lettres Françaises* claimed that "*Antigone* était une pièce ignoble, œuvre d'un Waffen SS".
[473] Fleming (2006), 178. See Witt (1993), 56, for the positive reception of Anouilh's plays in this period. See also Witt (2001), 21-13; 192.
[474] Flügge (1982) i. 222-23.
[475] Flügge (1982) i. 219.

The motifs of purity, youth, and money recur in Anouilh's *Antigone*. In the same article, Anouilh anticipated the advent of a "new world", based on real happiness rather materiality or compromise: "un monde où l'argent n'aurait plus le pouvoir de lui [cette jeunesse] faire le mal qu'il nous a fait".[476]

The theme of money (often associated in fascist propaganda with the Jews and capitalism) and its corruptive effect on human life and happiness recur in Anouilh's articles and in his tragedies of the 1930s.[477] Anouilh himself was born in a poor family and struggled with financial problems. His critique of money does not include explicit attacks on the Jews, but is presented in more abstract, idealist tones, which tend to satirise, rather than explicitly condemn, the "bourgeois". These articles are important to understand Anouilh's ideological position: they reveal his aristocratism as well as an ironic, superficial tone which undermines the serious commitment of his social critique and resurfaces in his plays.

Moreover, despite Anouilh's contributions to right-wing journals and his success under the Occupation, his *Antigone* became extremely popular in pro-Resistance circles after the end of the war.[478] Post-liberation reviewers began to re-appraise the play and focused their attention on the heroine, seen as symbol of a triumphant and militant Resistance, in opposition to the opportunistic collaborator. They hailed *Antigone* as a powerful play about the Resistance in France and praised her heroic decision, despite the consequences, to say "no" to the tyrant until death. As the Greek heroine refused compromise and fought for the assertion of her ideals, so the Free France supporters fought for their freedom against the despotism of German occupants. Her revolt was, according to an anonymous critic, *contagieuse*, and the title of Anouilh's *Antigone* could be completed by adding "Antigone ou la Resistance".[479] It is significant that this radical change of interpretation coincided with the liberation. In the climate of triumph which followed the end of the war, *Antigone* became, once more, the epitome of the Resistance.

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[476] Flügge (1982) i. 220.
[477] See Witt (1993), 53-5.
[478] Witt (2001), 228, reports that the earliest "pro-Resistance" reviews appeared in 1944 in *L'Homme libre* (29 September) and *Le Front natural* (30 September). See also Flügge (1982) i. 299-330; Bradby (1984), 36; Flashar (2009), 171-73.
[479] Anonymous author on *Le Nouvelliste de Neuilly* (9 February 1944), cited by Barsacq (2005), 304.

The reception history of Anouilh's adaptation thus proves that the *Antigone* could be equally understood as pro-Nazi or pro-Resistance and was contended between the two in different historical moments. Despite the significant emphasis on themes dear to the conservatives, I argue that Anouilh intentionally highlighted the presence of competing voices equally supported as much as undermined and shifted the focus onto existentialist, cynical, and nihilistic themes such as the sense of inevitability, absurdity, and the meaninglessness of existence. Because of the ideological context in which it was written, the play was indeed forced into political categorisations and labelled either pro-Nazi or pro-Resistance. In order to understand the storm of controversy that surrounded Anouilh's production, I shall analyse how the conflict between Antigone and Creon is presented in the play, explaining how it relates both to the original and to the anti-reactions of pro-Resistance and collaborationist critics.

2. The Presentation of Antigone in Anouilh's Version

The complex characterisation of Antigone led one critic to wonder "where exactly did Anouilh's Antigone come from?"[480] Anouilh has unveiled innumerable layers of personality, existence, and characterisations lying beneath the surface of the Greek model. In constructing his *Antigone,* Anouilh has recreated a new *Antigone* in which hidden aspects of the original are diagnosed and reconfigured. Rather than her Greek precursor, this Antigone resembles Anouilh's previous characters – namely, the typical tiny and skinny *jeune fille* as represented in *La Sauvage* (1934) and *Eurydice* (1942).[481] Antigone, too, is characterised as skinny, "noire et maigre" (p. 19: "dark and thin"),[482] thus resembling Thérèse and Eurydice. Anouilh's Antigone is a young woman who refuses the mediocre compromises of adulthood and wants to preserve the uncorrupted "purity" of youth – a pattern which also recurs in Anouilh's previous tragedies

[480] Deppman (2012), 527.
[481] See Vandromme (1965), 104; Witt (1993), 55. Thérèse, protagonist of *La Sauvage* (1934), condemned to live in an atmosphere of degradation, vulgarity, and venality, seeks to fulfil her love for Florence. However, she constantly feels a sense of guilt and wants to show him the misery which surrounded her before. Anouilh's Antigone also resembles Medée and Jeanne d'Arc in *L'Alouette*, although they were written and produced later – in 1946 and 1953 respectively. On female protagonists of Anouilh's plays, see Grossvogel (1958), 158.
[482] All references to Anouilh's *Antigone* are to page numbers in Anouilh (1954). English translations are taken from Freeman-Bray (2000). For an Italian translation see Ciani (2000), 61-118.

L'Hermine (1931), *La Sauvage* (1934), and *Le Rendez-vous de Senlis* (1937), in which an idealist, young protagonist fails to achieve happiness in a world dominated by money.

Anouilh's Antigone can also be seen as an existentialist figure, the embodiment of "free and pure choice".[483] The existence imposed upon her is a given essence rather than a choice of life. It is the author himself and, in the fiction of tragedy, the fatality imposed by the machinery of self-conscious theatre which impose certain characteristics of her being. In Anouilh's tragedy not only Antigone but each character is irrevocably trapped in his part, forced to fulfil a certain role to the bitter end, and the *dramatis personae* are aware of this necessity from the beginning. When she first appears, introduced by a prologue-character,[484] Anouilh's Antigone is thinking about her inevitable death and "role" in the story (p. 39):

> Voilà. Ces personnages vont vous jouer l'histoire d'Antigone. Antigone, c'est la petite maigre qui est assise là-bas, et qui ne dit rien. Elle regarde droit devant elle. Elle pense. Elle pense qu'elle va être Antigone tout-à-l'heure, qu'elle va surgir soudain de la maigre jeune fille noiraude et renfermée que personne ne prenait au sérieux dans la famille et se dresser seule en face du monde, seule en face de Créon, son oncle, qui est le roi. Elle pense qu'elle va mourir, qu'elle est jeune et qu'elle aussi, elle aurait bien aimé vivre. Mais il n'y a rien à faire. Elle s'appelle Antigone et il va falloir qu'elle joue son rôle jusqu'au bout.
>
> (p. 3) The people gathered here are about to act the story of Antigone. The one who's going to play the lead is the thin girl sitting there silent. Staring in front of her. Thinking. She's thinking that soon she's going to be Antigone. That she'll suddenly stop being the thin dark girl whose family didn't take her seriously, and rise up alone against everyone. Against Creon, her uncle … the king. She's thinking that she's going to die … though she's still young, and

[483] Sartre (1973), 56-7.
[484] Anouilh's single-man Chorus speaks as a "master critic, a disdainful but technically proficient authority on dramaturgical matters"; Deppman (2012), 523. A similar device is employed by Cocteau in *La Machine infernale* (1934) in which a voice explains the nature of tragedy. The procedure of self-conscious theatre and role-playing is also reminiscent of Luigi Pirandello's *Sei Personaggi in Cerca d'Autore* (1921) and was first employed by Anouilh in *Le Voyageur sans baggage* (1937).

like everyone else would have preferred to live. But there's nothing to be done. Her name is Antigone, and she's going to have to play her part right through the end.

Like the audience, the Prologue is an external observer of the story ("nous tous, qui sommes là bien tranquilles à la [Antigone] regarder"; "all the rest of us, who are just here to watch") who simply illustrates the specific role of each member of the cast. The speech is calculated to establish the conventional and artificial nature of the play, and to impose a theatrical frame upon its reality. It also serves to explain the implacable mechanism of tragedy and the inevitability of each role (p. 39): "*il va falloir* qu'elle [Antigone] joue son *rôle* jusqu'au bout".

The Prologue anticipates that the traditional conflict between Antigone and Creon will take place, although he immediately emphasises the differences of this Antigone from her Greek predecessor. Anouilh's Antigone presents remarkably non-heroic traits: she is a thin girl whom nobody took seriously (p. 39: "la maigre jeune fille noiraude et renfermée que personne ne prenait au sérieux dans la famille"). She admits that she would have liked to live (p. 47) and that she is not very brave (p. 72: "je n'aurais pas du courage éternellement").

Anouilh's Antigone is very different from her sister Ismene, who is "much prettier" (p. 40): "bien plus belle qu'Antigone", "rose et ore comme un fruit" (p. 19: "pink and gold like an apricot"). In the dialogue between the two sisters, Antigone herself denies to be beautiful (p. 50: "Non, je ne suis pas belle"; p. 14: "no − not beautiful."). Ismene admits that, although Antigone is young and pretty, her beauty is different: she is "pas belle comme nous, mais autrement." ("Yes, in your own way!"). These descriptions reveal that there is another, intimate conflict at play in the tragedy, between the different personalities of the two sisters: a beautiful, "trendy" Ismene opposed to a dark, silent, and yet exceptional Antigone.[485] Anouilh is interested in diagnosing the personal trauma of his heroine, presented as a "thorough nihilist, a little girl".[486]

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[485] Silva (2017b), 76, is right in arguing that there is "a multiplication of daily life incidents that strip the story's "heroes" of their grandeur and enhance the permanently "realistic" or common strokes of their portrait".
[486] Chiari (1958), 170-71.

In opposition to Ismene's femininity, Antigone is masculinised throughout the play and regrets not being a male (p. 50): "une fille, oui. J'ai déjà assez pleuré d'être une fille!" (pp. 13-4: "Only a girl! The tears I've shed because of it!"). In the original, too, Antigone appears unfeminine: after admitting that she has performed the burial, she employs a masculine adjective to refer to herself (464) and "various masculine forms replace in order to describe Antigone (e.g. 479, 496, 579-580)".[487] In Anouilh's version, Antigone envies the "normality" of her sister and tries to emulate her, for example by stealing her sister's clothes, make up, lipstick, and perfume in order to look more feminine in the eyes of her fiancé (p. 56: "un peu plus comme les autres filles").

Anouilh's Antigone is therefore different from her Greek predecessor: she is presented as an insecure and vulnerable young girl. The presence of the overprotective Nurse (one of the new characters introduced by Anouilh), together with several other references to Antigone's childhood, pinpoint the heroine's desire never to grow up, and her regression to a world of purity and innocence.[488] Anouilh's Antigone is "only" twenty, as we learn later from Creon (p. 70). She is characterised by spontaneity, naturalness, and by an intense love of life. Everything in her calls for life and for its simplest, natural pleasures, such as eating, running, and waking up early (p. 49: "qui se levait la première, le matin, rien que pour sentir l'air froid sur sa peau nue?"; p. 13: "who used to be up first in the morning just to feel the chill air on her bare skin?").[489] In representing her closeness to nature and wildness, Anouilh emphasises Antigone's child-like nature, her irrational behaviour and natural participation in the universe rather than in the sordid materiality of society. Such characterisation is absent in the

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[487] Andújar and Nikoloutsos (2017), 24. They also comment that Antigone "dies a very feminine death": her lamentation and suicide are traditionally female acts. Conversely, Anouilh's Ismene does not feel inhibited as a woman as in the original (61-2). In Sophocles, Ismene stresses their inferiority as women and shows feminine subservience to the male authority by contrast with Antigone's unconventional subversion of the female role. In Anouilh, Antigone's actions are not motivated by her status as woman; Fleming (2006), 174.

[488] It is not long ago that Creon gave Antigone her first doll (p. 70): "N'oublie pas que c'est moi qui t'ai fait cadeau de ta prèmiere poupée, il n'y a pas si longtemps."; (p. 34): "Don't forget it was I gave you your first doll, and not very long ago either!". Other references to childhood in the play include: Antigone's use of a child's spade to bury Polynices in her first attempt (p. 60: "une petite pelle d'enfant toute vieille"), the one she used to build sand-castles on the beach with Polynices during their holidays. As Antigone commits suicide, hanging herself by the cord of her robe, the messenger says that these strands (p. 95) "lui faisaient comme un collier d'enfant".

[489] On Antigone's relation with nature and animals, see Calin (1967), 77; 80.

original, in which Antigone keeps, throughout the tragedy, a seemly rational, noble stance in supporting her deeply-felt conviction that she has a personal responsibility of burying blood relatives and respecting the gods.

The theme of childhood has a major centrality in Anouilh's adaptation, in which Antigone is representative of the intransigent purity of youth against the corrupting compromises of adulthood. The insistence on Antigone's youth, her desire to remain a child and "pure", as well as her youthful passion and vocation for death, were praised by some critics who interpreted the play as an apology of fascist ideology.[490] However, Antigone's childish and innocent attitude also causes the instability of her commitment and allows Anouilh to emphasise the contradictions and irrationality of his Antigone, whose rebellion is presented as meaningless and irrational. The solitude and incompatibility of Antigone with the absurdity of adult life are fundamental in the shaping of Anouilh's own ideological interpretation of the play, which explores existentialist (rather than political) issues.

Anouilh's Antigone does not only regress to a "child"-like condition, characterised by vulnerability, absurdity, and freedom. Anouilh has gone a step further in characterising her as less than an adult: she resembles a child or an animal. Anouilh's *petite Antigone* describes herself in pejorative terms in the third person, as a dirty and untameable animal (pp. 47-8): "la sale bête, l'entêtée, la mauvaise" (p. 11: "self-willed little beast"). Whereas in the original the Chorus wonder whether the burial could be the sign of a god (278-79), in Anouilh's version Creon suspects that the burial could be the action of a *bête grattant*, a small animal scratching in the dirt, or *un enfant*, since a child's spade is found near the burial place (p. 60). Although he does not know that Antigone is the perpetrator of the act, this description emphasises the similarities of Anouilh's heroine to a child or animal and reveals that "the hand that confronts Creon is not divine – it originates in a very human childhood memory".[491] Also the Guard compares the heroine performing the burial to a small animal (p. 67): "on aurait dit une petite bête" (p. 30: "Just like a little animal!") and a "hyena" ("une petite hyène"). The overprotective Nurse addresses Antigone with

[490] This reading, as mentioned previously, is supported by Witt (1993) and Fleming (2006).
[491] Silva (2017b), 85. In the exchange with Antigone, Creon compares her to (p. 72): "un petit gibier pris"; (p. 35): "a little hare, caught already".

appellatives that recall the animal sphere: *mon pigeon*, *ma petite colombe*, and *ma tourterelle* (pp. 51-2). The bird-imagery emphasises the fact that Antigone is a small trapped animal, and that she is about to fly away and follow her destiny. Anouilh's Antigone also pays special attention to her pet dog, *Douce*, perhaps identifying herself with it: in case she cannot speak to him anymore and he is unhappy, she begs the Nurse to kill him (p. 53).[492]

Anouilh's childish and animal-like Antigone is careless of life. She does not want to understand (*comprendre*) and accept the obligations and responsibilities of adulthood. The verb *comprendre* is repeated ten times in the exchange between the two sisters, which emphasises how unreasonable and rebellious Antigone is in comparison with Ismene (p. 48):

> ANTIGONE. Je ne veux pas avoir raison.
> ISMÈNE. Essaie de comprendre, au moins!
> ANTIGONE. Comprendre … Vous n'avez que ce mot-là dans la bouche, tous, depuis que je suis tout petite. … Comprendre … Toujours comprendre. Moi je ne veux pas comprendre. Je comprendrai quand je serai vieille.

> (p. 12) ANTIGONE. I don't want to be right!
> ISMENE. At least try to understand!
> ANTIGONE. Understand! You've always been on at me about that, all of you, ever since I was little … Understand, understand, always understand! I don't want to understand. I can do that when I'm old.

The same word is repeated in the *agon* between Antigone and her uncle, as the heroine says (p. 77): "Je ne veux pas comprendre. C'est bon pour vous. Moi je suis là pour autre chose que pour comprendre. Je suis là pour vous dire non et pour mourir." (p. 40: "I don't want to [understand]. It's all very well for you, but I'm not here to

[492] Anouilh's Antigone wants to protect her pet dog, *Douce*, yet she also seeks maternal protection, as a child, and takes hold of the hand of the Nurse, in the hope that she will save her, as she did when she was *petite* and had nightmares. Moreover, she wishes to offer the same protection to her own child (p. 55): "Il aurait eu une maman toute petite et mal peignée – mais plus sûre que toutes les vraies mères du monde"; (p. 18): "He'd have had an unkempt, skinny little mother, but one who was safer than all the reals mothers put together".

understand. I'm here to say no to you, and to die.").[493] Both in this earlier and in later stages of the tragedy, Anouilh stresses the notions of reason, responsibility, and rationality characteristic of adulthood in opposition to that of freedom, irresponsibility, and irrationality, distinctive of childhood. Words such as *comprendre*, *réfléchir*, *avoir raison,* and *pondérée* are opposed to Antigone's *folie, fou/folle,* another word which recurs several times in the dialogue between Antigone and Ismene. Ismene says twice (p. 47; p. 50): "tu es folle" (p. 11 ; 14: "you're out of your mind"), and Antigone admits (p. 50): "Tu m'a toujours dit que j'étais folle, pour tout, depuis toujours." (p. 14: "You've always said that about everything I've ever done."). The Nurse, too, repeats to Antigone the same word (p. 53): "tu es folle ce matin!" (p. 17: "Whatever's the matter with you this morning?"). Later in the play Creon wonders (p. 60): "qui a été assez fou pour braver ma loi?" (p. 23: "Who was mad enough to flout my orders?"), which translates the words of the Greek Chorus (220), and speaks of Antigone's *folie* (p. 87: "Elle [Antigone] a préféré sa folie et la mort."; p. 50: "She preferred her own folly, and death."). The word occurs elsewhere throughout the play, in reference to Antigone (p. 83: "Tu es folle"; p. 46: "You're crazy"), Haemon (p. 89: "Il est sorti comme un fou", p. 52: "He's like a madman"), and the young page (p. 97: "Tu es fou, petit"; p. 60: "You're mad, boy!").[494]

Throughout the Sophoclean original, the necessity of showing good sense (*euboulia, nous*) and thinking (*phronein, manthanein*) is also constantly emphasised in opposition to folly or madness (*abulia, mania* etc.).[495] The protagonists accuse one another of foolishness: Ismene believes that Antigone is behaving "crazily" (*tamechana,* 92; *anous*, 99). Antigone's action is presented as irrational, a folly (*dysboulia,* 95) and madness (*aphrosynê*, 383). *Aboulia* or madness is considered the greatest evil in opposition to wisdom (*sophia*). Sophocles' Antigone disobeys and refuses to yield to the commands of the others: she is "the only one in the city who disobeyed" (656; and the word recurs at line 219, τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν, and 381, ἀπιστοῦσαν, always in reference to Antigone).

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[493] Sophocles' Antigone, too, presents her action as irrevocable. Anouilh's Antigone claims that she will repeat her deed a third time – even though the first two attempts have been unsuccessful and she clearly has no chance of completing the burial.
[494] See Deppman (2012), 529.
[495] See Cairns (2016), 81; endote 76: "madness or irrationality is predicated variously of Antigone, Creon, Haemon, and Eurydice." On *phronein* in *Antigone* see Kirkwood (1958), 233-39.

Anouilh expands the motif of Antigone's *folie* and disobedience in his version and shows that, beyond this particular act, the forbidden burial of her brother, Antigone has always been rebellious and disobedient. Her decision to bury her brother is not moved by admissible reasons but rather by a prime, inner, and fully unreasonable instinct, which undermines her status as adult. Therefore, Anouilh questions the motivation of Antigone's act and emphasises the irrationality of this young, rebellious woman, who acts irresponsibly, following her instincts. The changes to the original are directed towards a "desacralisation" of the ancient myth. We do not see on the stage a classical heroine: she is neither the epitome of fascist purity and nobility nor the champion of steadfast, political resistance, but rather a young, idealistic woman who lacks the grandeur of tragedy.

Anouilh's heroine also embodies a cultural type of aristocratic, pressured Princess who repulses, also physically, ordinary people such as the Guards. When the Guards approach her, Antigone claims (p. 64): "Je veux bien mourir, mais pas qu'ils me touchent!" (p. 27: "I don't care about dying – but I won't have them touch me!") and asks them to take off "their filthy hands off" ("leur sales mains"). According to some critics, Antigone's attitude, her fear of being touched by the mob and hear their shouting would reveal Anouilh's "own *aristocratisme*".[496] Elsewhere in the play it is emphasised that Antigone is a "king's daughter", for example by the Nurse (p. 43; 46) and by Antigone herself (p. 64: "je suis la fille d'Œdipe"; p. 27: "I'm Oedipus' daughter"; p. 76: "Moi je suis reine"; p. 39: "I'm a queen"). Furthermore, Creon claims that his law was made especially for (p. 69) "les filles des rois!" (p. 32: "the daughters of kings!"). However, it is difficult to reconcile these sparse references (which indeed recall the original) with "notions of the superiority of her [Antigone's] royal race",[497] not least because Anouilh's Antigone does not expect that, because of her privileged status, Creon will save her. Rather, she claims that she would have done the same even if she was "a servant girl" (p. 32). The obsession with her glorious death reflects the

[496] Monférier (1968), cited by Freeman (2000), 63, especially in reference to Ismene's repulsion of the mob. Also Antigone, before being led to the cave, claims (p. 89): "Je ne veux plus voir leur visages, je ne veux plus entendre leurs cris!"; (p. 52): "I don't want to see their faces any more, or hear their shouting."

[497] Witt (1993), 65. In the original, Antigone shows a certain awareness of her royal blood and "heroic temper", for example in the dialogue with Ismene (38).

original, in which Antigone claims that "to die" would be a "honour" (καλόν μοι τοῦτο ποιούσῃ θανεῖν, 72).

Anouilh's Antigone is therefore a proud, impulsive young woman. A collaborationist critic described her as a "degenerate, unintelligent madwoman".[498] Although this description reflects the animosity of contemporary writers against Anouilh's unconventional representation of Antigone, it is undeniable that she is less "heroic" and more humane than her Greek predecessor, a vulnerable and egocentric girl obsessed with her own individualism and death. Such an obsession could also represent a pathological condition: she is a young hysteric adolescent, who follows impatiently her instincts without listening to any reason, alternating states of clam and lucidity to outburst of *folie* and emotional despair. Rather than fighting for human rights and freedom, this Antigone rebels against the absurd compromises of human existence and is unable to leave behind the security and innocence of childhood.

3. The Presentation of Creon in Anouilh

As Anouilh's Antigone is not the classic heroine and presents more human traits, so Creon is not the typical brute statesman or tyrant. He is presented as a sympathetic character, a sensitive older man (p. 40): "cet homme robuste, aux cheveux blancs … Il a des rides, il est fatigué" (p. 4: "the vigorous grey-haired man … He is wrinkled, tired"). He is introduced by the Prologue as an extremely responsible, clever, subtle politician, and a book-lover. Before taking on his responsibilities and the burden of governance (p. 40) "il aimait la musique, les belles reliures, les longues flâneries chez les petits antiquaires de Thèbes." (p. 4: "He loved music and fine bindings, would spend hours prowling round Thebes's little antique shops.").

In Anouilh's version, the grand opening *rhesis* of the Sophoclean original (162-210), in which Creon defines the principles of his rule and presents himself as undisputed leader, is absent. It is only partly summarised in Creon's words to Antigone during their *agon*. In this context, Anouilh's Creon employs the same metaphor of the

[498] Méré cited by Freeman (2000), xlvii.

"ship of state". Leading men is compared by Creon to the action of *mener la barque* (p.76):

> Il faut pourtant qu'il y en ait qui mènent la barque. Cela prend l'eau de toutes parts, c'est plein de crimes, de bêtise, de misère … Et le gouvernail est là qui ballotte. L'équipage ne veut plus rien faire … et le mât craque, le vent siffle, et les voiles vont se déchirer.
>
> (pp. 39-40) Someone has to steer the ship. It's letting in water on all sides. It's full of crime and stupidity and suffering. The rudder's adrift. The crew won't obey orders … But the mast's split, the wind's howling, the sails will soon be in shreds.

The image of the ship presented by Anouilh's Creon is different from that of his Greek counterpart: it is unstable, carried by a turbulent wind, taking on water from everywhere, and its equipage only cares about its own *petites affaires*. A very different image compared to the upright ship of state described by Sophocles' Creon, safely floating though the sea, even though it is later revealed to be only illusory. This image caused some critics to interpret Creon's "collaborationist" policy as a sympathetic portrayal of Vichy France.[499] According to Fleming, the "ship-of-state-metaphor" is a clear allusion that Anouilh's "anti-heroic … ordinary" Creon is indeed turning into a despotic, Sophoclean tyrant.[500] Creon also suspects a social protest and rebellion behind Polynices' burial (p. 60), which might allude to recurrent strikes and protests occurring in France in the 1940s.[501] Creon says, too, that (p. 74) "au lendemain d'une révolution ratée, il y a du pain sur la planche" (p. 37: "There are plenty of urgent matters to attend to after a failed revolution").

Despite these allusions, Creon's presentation throughout Anouilh's tragedy suggests that he is a disillusioned and idle man, a cynic and conformist ruler, rather

[499] See Freeman (2000), 66-7.
[500] Fleming (2006), 177.
[501] Freeman (2000), 66.

than a despotic tyrant. He describes himself as a *prince sans histoire,* who wonders whether leading men is a vain office (p. 70):

> Moi, je m'appelle seulement Créon, Dieu merci. J'ai mes deux pieds par terre, mes deux mains enfoncées dans mes poches et, puisque je suis roi, j'ai résolu, avec moins d'ambition que ton père [Œdipe], de m'employer tout simplement à rendre l'ordre de ce monde un peu moins absurde, si c'est possible. Ce n'est même pas une aventure, c'est un métier pour tous les jours et pas toujours drôle, comme tous les métiers. Mais puisque je suis là pour le faire, je vais le faire.
>
> (p. 33) My name's only Creon, thank God. I've got both feet on the ground and both hands in my pockets. I'm not so ambitious as your father was, and all I aim at now I'm king is to try to see the world's a bit more sensibly run. There's nothing very heroic about it - just an everyday job, and, like the rest of them, not very amusing. But since that's what I'm here for, that's what I'm going to do.

Although he is devoted to his office and he prides himself of having established a little order in the world through his efforts, Anouilh's Creon sees kingship not as an honour but as a trade, a job to do, *un office sordide, la cuisine* (p. 80). He reluctantly agreed to play (p. 40) "au jeu difficile de conduire les hommes" because somebody had to do it (p. 4: "He is playing a difficult game: he has become a leader of men"). He simply woke up one morning and he was king (p. 75): "Un matin, je me suis réveillé roi de Thèbes. Et Dieu sait si j'aimais autre chose dans la vie que d'être puissant …" (p. 38: "One morning I woke up King of Thebes. Though heaven knows there were many things in life I loved better than power").

To his niece, he cynically reveals that he did not differentiate which of the brothers' bodies had to be buried. Since their corpses were unrecognisable, he just ordered a national funeral for one, the least damaged, and left the other to putrefy outside. He admits that the awful decree was simply an inevitable compromise of his *métier* of *cuisinier*, governor (p. 74): "C'est ignoble ... mais il faut que tout Thèbes sente cela pensant quelque temps" (p. 38: "It's … abysmally stupid. But it's necessary

that Thebes should smell the body for a while"). Therefore, he is disgusted by the whole affair as much as Antigone is, and reveals the cynicism of the governing process. Anouilh's Creon even suggests that he would have done the same at her age. He, too, was (p. 82) "un petit Créon maigre et pale comme toi et qui ne pensait qu'à tout donner lui aussi …" (p. 45 : "a young Creon as thin and pale as you, dreaming, like you, of sacrificing everything …"). Therefore, Anouilh legitimises Creon's position and shows that his edict is simply a result of the difficult political situation faced by the king. Creon is presented as a pragmatic and cynical man who has abandoned the ideals and illusions of his youth and has accepted the inevitable compromises of politics and adulthood.

The positive and cynical representation of Creon is reinforced by the fact that Anouilh's Creon suggests covering up the burial in order to appease the mob and avoid the impression that people are rebelling against his regime. Once he finds out that Antigone is responsible, he elaborates an alternative story in order to prevent accusations against her (p. 68): "Alors, écoute: tu vas rentrer chez toi, te coucher, dire que tu es malade, que tu n'es pas sortie depuis hier." (p. 31: Listen, then. Go back to your room, go to bed, and say you're ill and haven't been out since yesterday."). By contrast, in the original, Creon's inclination is to punish Antigone (480-81; 524) and there is a window of opportunity only at the end, after Tiresias' prophetic speech.[502] However, Anouilh's Creon is unable to save the heroine. Although he is the king, he cannot oppose the law that he himself has established (p. 87): "Je suis le maître avant la loi. Plus après." (p. 50: "[I am the master] under the law. Not against it."). This principle reveals that Creon is a sensible ruler who wants to appease the mob above all – even at the cost of sacrificing his niece. At the end, he realises that there is nothing he can do but keep playing his role and administrating the city's affairs. He thus exits and supervises a council meeting called for five o' clock.[503]

This characterisation of Creon differs from previous representations and receptions. Creon was traditionally identified with an out-and-out tyrant, for example in Hasenclever's and Sérgio's adaptations, whereas Anouilh "puts a strongly argued

[502] According to Cairns (2017), 196, there might be a window of opportunity in Sophocles' tragedy before: "Antigone can escape punishment if she publicly repudiates what she did in secret."
[503] Whereas Sophocles' Creon understands his responsibility in the tragedy and experiences a total collapse, Anouilh's Creon maintains his dignity and self-control intact.

political case for his 'tyrant' Creon".[504] In the original, Creon is not presented by default as an autocratic despot; rather, he voices sound and acceptable political principles in his opening speech.[505] Sophocles shows that Creon has a legitimate ground (someone transgressed his law and therefore has to be punished). However, he also emphasises the guilt of Creon, whose policy aimed at protecting the interests of his *polis*, but progressively turned into despotism and neglected the importance of the divine law and family relations. Both aspects – Creon as tyrant and Creon as reasonable and sensible ruler – are present in the original, but Anouilh emphasises the more humane and positive side, as well as the king's cynical and disillusioned attitude. This representation of Creon favoured the positive reviews by collaborationist critics in 1944. Some critics compared him to Marshal Pétain or to his vice premier Pierre Laval. As with Anouilh's Creon, somebody had to assume the burden of government. Petain had to face obvious difficulties and compromises: he could not refuse to cooperate with German demands, but in doing so he was condemned by others (the French resistance). Despite Anouilh's sympathetic treatment of the king, I shall show that the author was not siding either with Creon or Antigone. Rather than the contraposition between the individual and the law of the state, Anouilh was interested in portraying the opposition between two different ideals of life and happiness.

4. The Conflict between Antigone and Creon: *pourquoi?*

Sophocles' Antigone offers a number of motivations for her act, even before performing it. Her commitment is dictated by a religious and familial obligation, by love, honour, piety, and devotion to Polynices and to the dead. These principles drive her to prefer death to the dishonour of betraying her brother. Anouilh's Antigone is not equally reasonable and claims that (p. 47) "il y a des fois où il ne faut pas trop réfléchir" (p. 11: sometimes it's best not to think too much). She acts only because "she has to" (p. 68: "je le devais"; p. 31: "I had to") and invites Creon to follow the same necessity (p. 72): "Faites comme moi. Faites ce que vous avez à faire." (p. 36: "Be like me – do what you have to do."). Anouilh's Antigone reduces the tragic

[504] Freeman (2000), 65.
[505] See section 1.3.1. of this thesis.

conflict to a matter of inevitable "distribution". To Ismene she says that the "roles" have been distributed and there is nothing anyone can do. There is only one inevitable part for each of them to play and they are all predestined to play this part to the end (p. 47):[506]

> À chacun son rôle. Lui [Créon] il doit nous faire mourir, et nous, nous devons aller enterrer notre frère. C'est comme cela que ç'a été distribué.
>
> (p. 11) Everyone has his part to play. Creon has to have us put to death, and we have to go and bury our brother. That's how the cast-list was drawn up.

Creon, too, is aware of the arbitrary "role distribution": he acknowledges that he has *le mauvais role*, whereas Antigone has *le bon* (p. 73). Like Antigone, Creon has been forced to play out his role, unwillingly, because of his sense of responsibility, and has accepted the obligation of a pre-established necessity. However, Creon also emphasises that his attitude partly deviates from the "established role": an ordinary king would have already tortured and punished Antigone for her transgression. Antigone, too, admits that he is (p. 75) "trop sensible pour faire un bon tyran" (p. 39: "too sensitive to be a tyrant").

By contrast with Creon, Anouilh's Antigone does not provide a justification for her action, which is simply determined by her impulsive and irrational character and the refusal to conform to the rules (*nomima*) of society and life.[507] The argument she presents, that her unburied brother will wander forever without finding a resting

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[506] Antigone uses the conditional several times, especially in the first scene, in the exchange with her sister and the Nurse, thus implying that her destiny is inevitable: (p. 47): "j'aurais bien voulu ne pas mourir"; (p. 11): "I'd have preferred not to [die]"; (p. 48): "si je deviens vieille. Pas maintenant"; (p. 12): "I can do that [understand] when I'm old. If I ever am"; (p. 53): "si, pour une raison ou pour une autre, je ne pouvais plus lui [Douce] parler"; (p. 16): "if for some reason or other I couldn't talk to her myself anymore".

[507] To Antigone's unreflective and rebellious personality, Ismene contrasts and valorises her more *pondérée* and wise nature and attempts to convince Antigone by reasoning (p. 47): "Je suis l'aînée. Je réfléchis plus que toi. Toi, c'est qui te passe par la tête tout de suite, et tant pis si c'est une bêtise." (p. 11: "I'm older than you, and not so impulsive. You do the first thing that comes into your head, never mind whether it's sensible or stupid."). In Anouilh, the dialogue between Antigone and Ismene partly anticipates the one between Antigone and Creon.

place (p. 68), is soon rejected by herself. Creon plays cynically on her credulity (p. 71):

> Tu y crois donc vraiment, toi, a cet enterrement dans les règles? A cette ombre de ton frère condamnée à errer toujours si on ne jette pas sur le cadavre un peu de terre avec la formule du prêter ? … Et tu risques la mort maintenant parce que j'ai refusé à ton frère ce passeport dérisoire, ce bredouillage en série sur sa dépouille, cette pantomime dont tu aurais été la première à avoir honte et mal si on l'avait joué. C'est absurde!
>
> (p. 35) Do you really believe in this burial business? Is your brother's ghost really doomed to wander for ever if a handful of earth isn't thrown on the corpse accompanied by some ecclesiastical rigmarole? … Yet now you risk death because I've denied your brother that piffling passport, that mass-produced mumbo-jumbo you'd have been the first to be shamed and hurt by if it had actually been performed. It's ridiculous.

The heroine is forced to agree with Creon and admit the absurdity of her act. Whereas in the Greek original Antigone calls upon the higher unwritten laws of the gods (450-53) and her duty to her dead family members, in Anouilh the motif of burial (*cette pantomime*) is no more than a pretext to stage Antigone's tragedy.[508]

That Antigone's action could be motivated by brotherly love also appears fully inconsistent in Anouilh's version. Antigone admired her brothers' first cigarettes, long trousers, and late nights. However, Creon cynically reveals that they were both greedy and immoral thieves (pp. 78-9): Polynices lost a considerable sum of money in gambling and, as his father refused to repay it, he punched him in the face. They both tried, motivated by money, to assassinate Oedipus in order to obtain the kinship and then fought against each other. Polynices had no regard for Antigone and they had not seen each other since childhood.[509] In Sophocles' play the mutual fratricide has been

[508] In his *Antigone*, Anouilh portrays a secular universe. The dismissal of burial, as well as the absence of the prophet Tiresias and the gods, reflect Anouilh's own "anticlerical position"; Freeman (2000), 66.
[509] As Ismene points out (p. 58): "Polynice … ne t'aimait pas. Il a toujours été un étranger pour nous, un mauvais frère. Oublie-le, Antigone, comme il nous avait oubliée"; (p. 21): "Polynices ... didn't love

responsible for the *miasma* which polluted the city. Polynices in particular has been arrogant and wicked, and died "ravaging his land" (πορθῶν δὲ τήνδε γῆν, 518).[510] Yet the details about the attempted assassination of Oedipus, Polynices' gambling, and the brothers' irresponsible behaviour are added by Anouilh to increase the cynicism and irony of his version and to emphasise the meaninglessness of Antigone's attachment to her brother.

Deprived of any rational motivation, Antigone finally reveals the motivation behind her *geste absurd*. Whereas Creon suspects a political reason, Anouilh's Antigone admits that the real justification of her act can be found only in herself (p. 72): "Pour moi"; (p. 35: "Myself"). It is an inner compulsion that motivates her action, meant for no one but exclusively for her true self – or the "self" imposed upon her pre-established role, which seeks to assert self-sufficiency and autonomy. Anouilh thus reverses the motivations of Antigone's act: no longer religious faith or brotherly love, but the refusal of life and the satisfaction of opposing to the law. Anouilh's Antigone simply refuses to say "yes" to life and to rely effortlessly on the world's compromises, as Creon suggests (p. 82):

> CREON. Tu l'apprendras toi aussi, trop tard, la vie c'est un livre qu'on aime, c'est un enfant qui joue à vos pieds, un outil qu'on tient bien dans sa main, un banc pour se reposer le soir devant sa maison … La vie, ce n'est peut-être tout de même que le bonheur!
>
> (p. 45) CREON. You'll find that out for yourself … when it's too late. Life's a book you enjoy, a child playing round your feet, a tool that fits into your hand, a bench outside your house to rest on in the evening … Life is probably nothing other than happiness.

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you. He was always more a stranger to us than a brother. Forget him, Antigone, as he forgot us!" In the original, too, there is no confirmation nor mention that Antigone knew her brother.

[510] In some versions of the myth, Polynices is responsible for the war. See Creon's comments on Polynices in Sophocles' version (198-202; 280-89; 514-20).

Whereas Creon is depicting a conventional, reassuring, and mediocre future, happiness as Antigone conceives it is not for this world. Therefore, Antigone emerges from this exchange fully aware of the fact that she must say "no" to life (pp. 82-3):

> ANTIGONE. Quel sera-t-il mon Bonheur? Quelle femme heureuse deviendra-t-elle, la petite Antigone? Quelles pauvretés faudra-t-il qu'elle fasse elle aussi, jour par jour, pour arracher avec ses dents son petit lambeau de Bonheur? … S'il [Hémon] doit devenir près de moi le monsieur Hémon, s'il doit apprendre à dire "oui", lui aussi, alors je n'aime plus Hémon!
>
> (p. 46) ANTIGONE. And what will my happiness be like? What kind of a happy woman will Antigone grow into? What base things will she have to do, day after day, in order to snatch her own little scrap of happiness? … If he [Haemon] is going to become just a conventional spouse and learn to say "yes" like the rest – then no, I don't love Haemon any more!

She shall love Haemon as long as he is young and loyal, not if he becomes one of the many *candidats au bonheur* or *cuisiniers* (pp. 47-8: "craven candidates for happiness" or "cooks"). In opposition to her uncle, who has accepted the sordid mechanisms of life, Antigone refuses a conventional life made of compromises, without realising that this action is, in fact, inevitable and imposed upon her. The word *bonheur* retains opposite meanings for Creon and for Antigone. To Creon, it means maturity, rationality, and acceptance. To Antigone, it means *la vita comoda* and accepting compromises.

The concept of happiness is the object of a sustained reflection in the Greek text. In the second *stasimon*, the Chorus speak of *eudaimonia* in reference and contraposition to the sorrows of the house of the Labdacids (583-84). Happiness is linked to the gods and to *eu phronein*: happy, *eudaimones*, are those whose time and house have not been shaken by the gods. As in Anouilh's play, so in Sophocles' tragedy: happiness is something unattainable for the heroine. In Sophocles, Antigone is the "unhappy daughter of Oedipus", incapable of achieving happiness because of the guilt inherited from her family, which is prompted by the gods' uncontrollable plan

and by the arbitrary *tukhe*. Anouilh's Antigone, too, claims to be like her father Oedipus (p. 84): "Comme mon père, oui!" Like Sophocles' heroine, Anouilh's Antigone cannot achieve happiness, *bonheur* (*eudaimonia*). She wants everything straight away, not a small portion nor a mediocre compromise (p. 84): "Vous me dégoûtez tous avec votre bonheur! Avec votre vie qu'il faut aimer coûte que coûte." (p. 47: "You disgust me, all of you, you and your happiness! And your life, that has to be loved at any price.").[511]

According to some critics, the heroine's desire to preserve a pure, ideal, ephemeral, and innocent status, her idealistic, youthful, and rebellious fantasies, as well as her vocation for death and danger, reflect, though indirectly, a "fascist aesthetic" and rhetoric. What Anouilh's Antigone refuses is, specifically, a "bourgeois" life and happiness, synonymous with mediocrity and compromise against grandeur and purity – promoted by fascist ideology. Because bourgeois values were associated by fascist intellectuals with "democracy", Antigone's refusal of a mediocre type of *bonheur* is interpreted by Fleming as complicit in fascism.[512] The contemporary scholar Witt suggests, too, that Antigone's rebellious words "vous me dégoûtez tous avec votre bonheur" echo Mussolini's slogan "noi siamo contro la vita comoda".[513]

It is undeniable that Anouilh's *Antigone,* as do his articles of the 1940s, tackle themes suitable to fascism – such as the refusal to conform to the oppressive and mediocre constraints of (bourgeois) society and the aspiration for purity and danger. However, these allusions remain a "less directly political form fascism".[514] It is difficult to label as "fascist" general literary themes and cultural preferences that do not explicitly evince a political opinion. More important, I think, is to stress the meaninglessness of the heroine's arbitrary rebellion and the absurd inevitability of the tragic process, which ultimately reveal that everyone is innocent. In the exchange with Creon, Anouilh's heroine is sure that she does not want to accept a bourgeois

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[511] The same phrase is pronounced by Thérèse, protagonist of Anouilh's 'pièce noir' *La Sauvage* (1934), 159.
[512] Fleming (2006), 179. In an article "Introduction à la littérature fasciste", Turlais (1943), 32, speaks of the "immonde bassesse de la société capitaliste et bourgeoise". The same refusal of bourgeois values had been consistently portrayed in Anouilh's previous works such as *L'Hermine* (1931) and *La Sauvage* (1934); see Witt (1993), 56.
[513] Witt (1993), 54.
[514] Cairns (2016), 135.

conventional future and grow old. However, soon after, Antigone realises that she no longer knows what she is dying for, and she simply asks forgiveness to Haemon: (p. 94): "Je ne sais plus pourquoi je meurs. Pardon, mon chéri. Sans la petite Antigone, vous auriez tous été bien tranquilles." (p. 57: "I don't know any more what I'm dying for. I'm sorry, my darling. It would have been nice and peaceful for you all without me.").[515]

In portraying Antigone's vacillations and uncertainties, Anouilh voices the ambiguities of the heroine's motivation as represented in Sophocles. The Greek heroine, too, shows a sign of self-doubt: she wonders whether she has been abandoned by the gods (925-26). She is extremely isolated in her suffering: not even the Chorus support her; yet she goes to her death convinced that she has accomplished the right course of action. In the famous lines 905-12, she asserts that she would have not accomplished the same sacrifice for a husband or a child; she is aware that only a brother is irreplaceable and thus she has to persevere in her action. Such a controversial assertion of *philia* is absent in Anouilh's version, in which it could have been interpreted by pro-Resistance critics as a further admission of the partiality of Antigone's rebellion. In the modern version Antigone acts only for herself (*pour moi*): her brother's burial has only been a pretext to enact her own egoistic self-assertion.

Therefore, Anouilh's heroine is a self-interested, rebellious woman unable to represent the voice of the community. She lacks the strong ideological commitment of her Greek predecessor. Antigone's choices in Anouilh are irrational, instinctive, unmotivated, and her death ultimately meaningless and absurd. In this irrationality and absurdity, I believe, lies the key for understanding Anouilh's portrayal of Antigone. Her repentance corroborates the uselessness of her action as well as the absurdity of her rebellion, thus undermining the fascist-inspiration of her striving towards an ideal purity. Although the allusions to "fascist aesthetic" detected by Witt and Fleming might reveal a political liability, especially if considered in the political context of the Occupation, they remain less direct and far from explicit. Anouilh's Antigone is not the epitome of a pure, uncompromising, and youthful fascist heroine, as Witt and

[515] This assertion explicitly contradicts Cocteau's Antigone, who claims (p. 43): "Voilà pourquoi je meurs." It is thus an intertextual demonstration of the 'metatheatricality' of Anouilh's version, which plays with the previous tradition of *Antigones* and their motivations.

Fleming want her to be, because she admits that she does not know why she is dying and realises that Creon was right. She is not, either, an exemplary, heroic, Resistance fighter because she acts only for herself and not for the community. Anouilh's Antigone escapes binary oppositions or classifications. She is an anarchic, idealistic adolescent obsessed with her own individualism and death. Although her arbitrary and irrational act shows the inability of power to coerce resistance into order, it remains symbolic and irremediably fatal. Anouilh cynically emphasises that the heroine is compelled to make these choices and to die tragically because of the necessity of the theatrical role imposed upon her. Her destiny is as inevitable as Creon's choice of compromise. Such inevitability shows the author's own cynical and nihilistic view of existence.

5. Inevitability and Tragic Determinism

In Anouilh's version, the lyrics of the Sophoclean Chorus are absent, but their philosophical stance is partly absorbed into the – more playful – intervention of the Chorus explaining the nature and *déroulement* of tragedy. Anouilh's Chorus compare tragedy to a machine, which naturally and mechanically unfolds according to inevitable, though fictional, directions and roles assigned to each character (p. 62):

> Voilà … le ressort est bandé. Cela n'a plus qu'à se dérouler tout seul … C'est tout. Après, on n'a plus qu'à laisser faire. On est tranquille. Cela roule tout seul. C'est minutieux, bien huilé depuis toujours.[516]

> (p. 25) So. Now the spring is wound. The tale will unfold all of itself. … That's all it takes. And afterwards, no need to do anything. It does itself. Like clockwork set going since the beginning of time.

Like the Sophoclean Chorus, the modern Chorus acknowledge that man cannot escape his destiny. In the Sophoclean original the Chorus launch into the famous 'Ode to Man'

[516] This description is reminiscent of Cocteau's imagery of the "infernal machine" and his mechanised view of destiny. See section 6 of chapter 3.2.1.

and consider the achievements, potential, and limits of the human race. Anouilh's Chorus also accentuate that not even man, the most resourceful of all creatures, is able to predict nor change his fate, determined by an incomprehensible determinism. In addition to Sophocles, Anouilh adds a meta-theatrical comment on the differences between *tragédie* and *drame* (pp. 62-3):

> C'est propre, la tragédie. C'est reposant, c'est sûr … Dans le drame, avec ces traitres, avec ces méchants acharnés, cette innocence persécutée, ces vengeurs, ces terre-neuve, ces lueurs d'espoir, cela déviant épouvantable de mourir, comme un accident.
>
> (p. 26) Nice and neat, tragedy. Restful, too. In a drama, with its traitors, its desperate villains, its innocent victims, avengers, devoted followers and glimmers of hope, death becomes something terrible, a kind of accident.

Whereas melodrama presents the characters and public with the illusion that happiness will prevail and the "bad" characters (*ces méchants acharnés*) will be punished, tragedy offers no possibility nor hope of salvation. Indeed, paradoxically, the fact that the tragic outcome of the story is inevitable from the beginning makes it reassuring (*réassurant*). There is nothing anyone can do but accept that someone will die and someone will kill. Therefore, in Anouilh's tragedy, there are no "good" and "bad" characters, everyone is innocent (p. 62: "on est innocent en somme"; p. 26: "All innocent!"). This assertion provides the key for understanding Anouilh's own view of the play: there are no innocent victims (Antigone) nor criminals (Creon), but only different inescapable "roles" imposed upon the characters by an irrational and unpredictable distribution of roles. This "neutrality" and the "Hegelian balance" between equally valid positions allow the author to avoid deliberately a clear-cut political position – thus escaping reprisal in the context of 1944 occupied France. Anouilh does not side either with Creon or Antigone, but rather emphasises the absurdity of the whole tragic process. Regardless of Creon's good intentions and his willingness to save Antigone, the outcome of the tragedy is inescapable and Antigone will die.

Therefore, Anouilh's Antigone refuses to hope that the story might change and repudiates what she calls *sale espoir* (p. 47: "lousy hope"). According to Antigone's view of life, it is preferable to live without illusions and false hopes, which can only cause delusion. In the original, too, hope (*elpis*) is described as the deception of the light-minded (*kouphonoos*), at lines 615-17. The second *stasimon* (583-625) emphasises the illusory nature of hope, associated with the limited potential of human reason (unable to recognise deception), the gods (that can decide to lead one's mind towards *atê*), and the inevitability of fate.[517] Because of the instability of human life, even in his highest moment of glory and wealth, man has to remain vigilant and expect disaster.

In Greek tragedy human endeavours are determined both by external superhuman forces and by man's own false hopes and errors. In response to this "inscrutable causation both internal and external to character and action",[518] Anouilh employs the notion of tragic necessity and self-conscious theatricality. It is the absurdity of existence (an external random "distribution") that dictates the tragic destiny of the characters – rather than an error (*hamartia*, common to all mankind, 1023-24), an inherited guilt, or a calamity imposed upon a mortal man by a god (594-603). In Anouilh, Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus because of the role-playing imposed upon her by theatrical necessity (p. 70: "quand on s'appelle Œdipe, ou Antigone …"; p. 33: "if your name's Oedipus – or Antigone"). Both Creon and Antigone do not know that their choices are pre-determined *a priori* and are beyond their control. Like the Sophoclean characters, they are unable to foresee the consequences of their actions: man has no control over his life, which is ultimately determined by an irrevocable fate unknown to all.[519] Similarly, Anouilh's Chorus assert that the characters performing the play are behaving out of a tragic necessity, which implies a catastrophic ending determined by already pre-established decisions and a causal distribution of roles. The tragedy ends as the Chorus steps forward and comments upon the events (pp. 97-8):

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[517] On the notion of *elpis* and its connection to *atê* and *hamartia* in Sophocles see section 1.4.3. of this thesis.
[518] Mogyorodi (1996), 362.
[519] This emerges both in the first (361-62) and second (613-25) *stasima*, as well as in the Chorus' words to Antigone (944-87).

> Et voilà … maintenant c'est fini. Ils sont tout de même tranquilles. Tous ceux qui avaient à mourir sont morts. Ceux qui croyaient une chose, et puis ceux qui croyaient le contraire – même ceux qui ne croyaient rien et qui se sont trouvés pris dans l'histoire sans y rien comprendre.
>
> (p. 60) So … now it's over. It's nice and peaceful anyway. Everyone who had to die is dead: those who believe in one thing, those who believed in the opposite … even those who didn't believe in anything, but were caught up in the story without knowing what was going on.

Each character has fulfilled his inevitable role, and is released from his/her duty: now everyone is *tranquil*. Towards the end of the tragedy the Sophoclean Chorus, too, emphasise the inescapability of fate (already assessed in the first three *stasima*) through three exemplary stories (the mythical stories of Danae, Lykourgos, and Kleopatra, 944-87). Whereas the Sophoclean Chorus provide the audience with a moral lesson (wisdom can be learnt and lead to happiness, 1347-48), Anouilh's Chorus simply acknowledge that there is no possibility of escaping a pre-established fate and observe how removed the tragic events are from the unconcerned Guards. Significantly, they are the last characters to appear on stage. Tragedy is not their *oignon*: they keep drinking wine and playing cards.

The pessimistic end of the play offers no solution to the absurd enactment of the tragedy and suggests a nihilistic view of the world: all values and beliefs are dismissed as perfectly useless and tragedy as a gratuitous, irremediable experience. If there is a lesson at all, it lies in Antigone's belated realisation that it would have been "easy to live" (pp. 93-4): "Créon avait raison … Je le comprend seulement maintenant combien c'était simple de vivre." (pp. 56-7: "Creon was right … It's only now I realise how easy it was to live."). Although real happiness is unattainable in this world, and the pure self is incompatible with the absurd demands of life, Antigone's realisation implies that "in all its imperfection life is still worth living".[520] The meaninglessness

[520] Freeman (2000), xxxix.

of the heroine's rebellion and the theatrical determinism of Anouilh's tragedy do indeed pessimistically imply that nobody can do anything to change the reality.

At the end, Antigone says to the Guard that Creon was right (p. 92) and Creon says to the page that she was right (p. 97). Only at the end does he realise that it is better to never grow up and face the mediocrities of life. Therefore, Anouilh highlights that both characters fully understand the other's position. In the original, whereas Creon belatedly admits that it is better to keep the "established laws" (καθεστῶτας νόμους, 1113), Antigone does not recognise the validity of Creon's principle; she simply doubts her own and wishes that Creon suffers "as great evils as the one unjustly inflicted on her" (925-28). By showing that both positions are equally right and wrong to a certain extent, but cannot be simultaneously valid, Sophocles' *Antigone* "avoids a one-sided, partisan interpretation of the play's major characters as either exemplary heroes or unqualified villains".[521] In Anouilh's version, too, there are no victims nor oppressors, as it appears from the unpredictable distribution of roles and from the notion of tragedy as an inevitable and predetermined mechanism. Anouilh emphasises the play's open texture and offers different acceptable ways of interpreting the play. Through the complex and ambivalent representation of the Antigone-Creon conflict, the author carefully avoids a clear-cut distinction between "villain and victim".[522]

6. Use of Irony and Desacralisation in Anouilh's *Antigone*

Anouilh's tragedy opens as the characters are on the scene, dressed in simple evening clothes.[523] They "bavardent, tricotent, jouent aux cartes" (p. 3: "chatting, knitting, playing cards"), waiting to be introduced and play the story of *Antigone*. The colloquial language, domestic setting, as well as other blatant anachronisms contrast with the dramatic tension of tragedy. For example, Polynices is described as *tombereau, fleur de cotillon, fêtard* (p. 42: "a brinless roisterer, a cruel, soulless little thug"). He smoked cigarettes and drove sports cars. Antigone is dressed in Parisian *couturiers* and she has

[521] Liapis (2013), 82. See section 1.3.2. of this thesis.
[522] Freeman (2000), 65.
[523] On the stage directions and costumes of the play, see Barsacq (1959), 34-5: "Le roi et tous les membres de la famille royale portaient le frac, Antigone et sa sœur Ismène de longues robes, noire et blanche, et les gardes le smoking, sur lequel ils avaient passé un ciré de couleur noire."

breakfast with (p. 15) "coffee and some toasts". Haemon asked her to marry him at a ball and Creon tells her niece to give a child to her fiancé (p. 70): "Grossis un peu, plutôt, pour faire un gros garçon à Hémon" (pp. 33-4: "You want to fatten yourself up a bit and give Haemon a nice sturdy son!").

The anachronisms, together with the colloquialism of the style and the overall desacralisation of the tragedy, were criticised by traditionalist critics and by Classicists as inconsistent with the dignity of tragedy. "On n'a jamais si bien trahi Sophocle", claims Jean Sauvenay.[524] Together with him, Hubert Gignoux and Jaques Poujol insist that the play lacked the tragic element and that the author just recreated in *Antigone* his previous characters Thérèse and Eurydice.[525] Gignoux characterised Antigone as a "drame psychologique en marge d'une tragédie", because of the flagrant anachronisms and because of a reduction of the dramatic conflict to a statement that both Creon and Antigone "ont également tort".[526] Salacrou also complained that "ce n'est plus *Antigone*, c'est les 'caprices d'Antigone'".[527]

However, the deliberate anachronisms served the author's intention to emphasise the self-conscious playing with modernity, thus conveying an air of artificiality. In emphasising the theatrical frame of the tragedy as well as the anti-heroic aspects of the ancient drama, Anouilh intentionally desacralised the tragedy and played with the audience's expectations and previous knowledge of the story. For example, in the opening scene, the Nurse naively suspects that her *petite* Antigone left the house during the night because of a romantic rendezvous with her lover (p. 42: *un amoureux*).[528] Through this ambiguity, Anouilh played on the notion of *philia* and possible sexual overtones of Antigone's relation with her brother, already present in the original (73-6).[529] The Nurse is unaware of a fact that the audience may have, at this point, deduced: the *amoureux* is Polynices, and Antigone is returning home at four o' clock in the morning after having performed the funeral rite.

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[524] Sauvenay (1944), cited by Beugnot (1977), 33.
[525] Gignoux (1946), 94-5; Poujol (1952), 338.
[526] Gignoux (1946), 115.
[527] Salacrou (1944), cited by Barsacq (2005), 306.
[528] As Silva (2017b), 81, correctly remarks, despite the Nurse's attempts to understand Antigone, she "is unable to penetrate either the strangeness of her personality or the meaning of her actions".
[529] In the original, too, Sophocles employs the Greek word *philos* (73; 81) or *autadelphos* (503; 517) to emphasise the bond which ties Antigone to her brother as blood-relative (also stressed at lines 466-67 and 511).

Moreover, the "seriousness" of the original tragic conflict is reduced in the modern version in favour of a number of minor, intimate, and personal conflicts, such as the one between Ismene and Antigone. Anouilh's Antigone is a pathetic, vulnerable, and insecure character: she steals her sister's clothes the night before burying her brother in the attempt to look "une vraie femme" (p. 18: "a real wife"). She still wonders whether Haemon was mistaken in choosing her instead of her sister Ismene, and whether he regrets his choice. The central confrontation between Antigone and Creon is changed by Anouilh and becomes "a clash of two all-consuming life philosophies, in which the experienced realist attempts to disillusion the naive romantic".[530] Whereas in the original version the central collapse is represented by the opposition between the law of the state and the law of family and gods, the main confrontation in Anouilh sees two opposite conceptions of life, one which believes in the pragmatic acceptance of compromise and mediocrity, the other which privileges idealism and purity.

In Anouilh, the trivial and colloquial dialogues of the Guards contrast with the dramatic conflicts of the tragedy and serve to emphasise certain macabre and grotesque aspects. Anouilh introduces three Guards instead of one and expands their role. Although Sophocles does dedicate a certain attention to this character, a cowardly and materialistic figure only moved by selfish preoccupations,[531] Anouilh depicts the Guards in greater detail, as men who serve whoever is in power, insensitive, concerned only with supporting their families.[532] Paradoxically, the Guard named Jonas is the last person with whom Antigone speaks and interacts before her death. His frivolous discourses and military slang contrast with Antigone's tragedy and her invocation (p. 92): "O tombeau! O lit nuptial! O ma demeure souterraine!" (p. 51: "Hail, then, my grave, my marriage bed, my underground home!"). The lyrical and dramatic tone of this line is inconsistent with Antigone's usual plain diction: Anouilh is here quoting his Sophoclean model (891-92): ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς / οἴκησις ἀείφρουρος. In Anouilh, Antigone's *kommos*, although lyrical, loses the intensity of

[530] Anderson (2012), 613.
[531] The Sophoclean Guard is a "garrulous, cowardly, yet witty figure"; Griffith (1999), 165.
[532] Freeman (2000), 64, remarks that such a military caricature is "commonly found in French comic writing (and [Anouilh] had experienced it himself during his war service in 1939-40)".

the original and is desacralised by the presence of the materialistic Guard, preparing a *chique* in front of her, and his superficial comments.

Towards the end of the play, when Antigone writes a romantic farewell letter to her fiancé, the scene is made playful and grotesque because of the comments of the insensitive Guard. When Antigone asks him to send the letter, the Guard protests that it is too dangerous. He is only convinced by Antigone's offering of her golden ring, on the condition that he will write it in his own handwriting (p. 92: "Ton écriture … C'est trop laid, tout cela, tout est trop laid."; p. 56: "Your writing … ! Oh, it's all too horrible!"). The overall effect of this scene is sharply grotesque and reveals the aristocratism of Anouilh's Antigone, who is disgusted by the common, "mediocre" men, their egotism and indifference.

Therefore, the use of irony, the presence of the materialistic Guards, the anachronisms, as well as the ironic and distancing comments of the Chorus emphasise the metatheatricality of the performance and strip the ancient tragedy of its grandeur. The self-conscious playing with reality and the desacralisation of the tragedy accentuate the open, ideologically unstable texture of Anouilh's *Antigone* and intentionally shift the attention away from its political complexities.

7. Anouilh's *Antigone*: Trajectories of Interpretation

Unlike other authors, Anouilh has published no theory concerning his plays and he was reticent in revealing details of his own biography and works. When he was asked what he thought of his *Antigone,* he simply declared: "En l'absence de Sophocle, empêché, je ne me crois pas le droit d'avoir une opinion sur *Antigone*."[533] However, it is evident from his letters that Anouilh was well aware of the dangers implied in his publication and his liability to be condemned both before and after the liberation of France.[534] In a letter from 1944, Anouilh communicated to Brasillach his concerns regarding *Antigone* and his intention to dedicate himself to comedies:

[533] Anouilh (1944), cited by Flügge (1982) i. 330. See also Jolivet (1963), 5; Bradby (1984), 35.
[534] See also Flashar (2009), 169; 396.

> *Antigone* est déjà bien loin de moi et pose seulement de graves problèmes pour la suite, car ce phénomène collectif est assez inquiétant. Je vais résolument faire quelques comédies.[535]

In another letter to Barsacq, he asked him to detect and eliminate "des phrases dangereuses" in the play.[536] He perhaps alluded to Antigone's claim that she is a little young for what she has to go through (p. 51) – which could have been interpreted as an allegory for the members of French Resistance and the inefficacy of their acts of defiance against the Nazis. Moreover, Creon claims twice that he does not want Antigone to die (p. 74) "dans une histoire de politique" (p. 37: "in a political scandal"). Through the Guards, a "short-sighted military trio executing orders without thinking",[537] Anouilh condemns the compliance of Vichy police during the German Occupation of France, who refused to challenge the status quo and simply executed the orders.

Although *Antigone* was a potentially political and subversive play, it was accepted by collaborationist and German censors. This is not surprising in the context of the Second World War, in which *Antigone* was successfully performed elsewhere in Nazi Germany in the same period. What is surprising is that the play continued to be a success after the liberation, despite the fact that Anouilh was praised in fascist journals and literature under the Occupation. In the context of the liberation, Anouilh's "fascist" Antigone could have caused his author an immediate accusation. However, Anouilh's name never appeared on the "black lists" in the period which followed the liberation and saw a wave of executions of suspected collaborators, known as the *épuration sauvage* ("wild purge").[538]

A close analysis of the play has indeed revealed that Anouilh was interested in portraying the absurdity of life and the impossibility to realise the aspirations of childhood in adult life, rather than the political opposition of the individual against the tyranny of the state. Anouilh's Creon is a sensible and clever ruler who, unlike the Sophoclean Creon, is not guilty. Anouilh's Antigone admits that "Creon was right",

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[535] Anouilh cited by Flügge (1982) i. 291.
[536] Anouilh cited by Flügge (1982) i. 244.
[537] Urdician (2017), 51.
[538] See Flügge (1982) i. 306. On his experience of the *épuration*, see Anouilh (1987), 173-79.

and she does not inspire resistance nor fascist values but rather vulnerability, instability, and irrationality. She is a self-interested young woman who does not want to grow up. Age is of crucial importance in Anouilh's play: Antigone's desire for eternal innocence and pure life is opposed to Creon's opportunistic acceptance of the compromises of adulthood. Although he is trapped in his role of *chef d'État*, Creon understands Antigone's position: he has insights and intuitions that the Greek Creon only gains at the end and even admits that she was right. In Anouilh's tragic world, both the heroes and the anti-heroes or "compromisers" are innocent:[539] they are merely acting within a play, and the tragedy is simply unavoidable. It is precisely the cynical and ironic nature of Anouilh's play, its intentionally unclear political allegory (enhanced by the ambiguities of the original itself), as well as the absence of a categorical distinction between victims and villains that caused the variety of interpretations and controversy in the context of 1944 occupied France.

Several years after the publication of *Antigone*, in a moment when he did not have to justify his political position, Anouilh claimed: "J'avais la conscience tranquille … Je ne savais presque rien de la Résistance à cette époque … Je n'étais qu'un auteur."[540] Jean Davy, who played the role of Creon in the original cast, denied that Anouilh had any political intention, since he did not give any special instructions to the actors but simply claimed:

> Mes enfants, mettez-vous bien ça dans la tête: vous ne jouez pas *Antigone*, vous jouez à *Antigone*, comme des enfants jouent à pigeon-vole ou à colin-maillard.[541]

Similarly, André Barsacq suggested that Anouilh's *Antigone* is located "en dehors de toute politique".[542] This is not to claim that Anouilh's *Antigone* is apolitical and a simple philosophical and nihilistic reflection on human existence. Overall, the dramatic situation portrayed in Anouilh's *Antigone*, its issues of individual freedom

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[539] This categorisation recurs in Anouilh's *Pièces noires*. On the difference between the heroes and the mediocre see Witt (1993), 55.
[540] Anouilh (1987), 166-67.
[541] Anouilh, cited by Flügge (1982) i. 263-64.
[542] Barsacq, cited by Flügge (1982) i. 265.

and collective responsibility, resistance and compromise, were not unfamiliar to the lives of French audiences, with reflections of contemporary political situation during the Occupation years. Anouilh's *Antigone* "touche par son sujet à nos préoccupations tragiques: la mort qui plane sur elle, ne plane-t-elle pas sur nous chaque jour?"[543] Anouilh himself attested that a contemporary episode appealed to his imagination and enhanced his decision to adapt *Antigone* for the modern stage. As early as August 1941, during a reunion of collaborationist leaders in Versailles, a young resistance fighter, Paul Collette, shot at a group of French soldiers and injured Pierre Laval and Marcel Déat. He did not belong to any political movement. This pointless act, which did not have any consequence other than Collette's death, and its mysterious motivation became the model for Anouilh's obstinate young heroine, ready to defy Creon with a child's spade as only weapon. However, Anouilh made this association explicit only years later, in 1979, and described his inspiration in those terms:

> Je me vois sur mon balcon (avenue Trudaine) tenant un numéro d'une revue allemande (en français) de l'époque, *Signal*, où il y avait les photos des premiers 'terroristes' … Un sentiment de pitié et d'absurdité, la révélation, anticipée d'ailleurs que nous vivions au temps d'*Antigone* et j'ai commencé tout de suite.[544]

Therefore, Anouilh claimed that he was inspired by the clear association of the story of Antigone with Collette's gratuitous and irrational act, and by his realisation of the absurdity and folly intrinsic in human life. At the same time, he intentionally emphasised the ambiguous nature and competing voices of the ancient tragedy and avoided a univocal, clear-cut ideological position. Through his tragedy, Anouilh expressed his pessimistic view of existence − arguably as a reaction to the historical and political circumstances in which the play was written. Although the sparse and indirect allusions to what Witt and Fleming define "fascist aesthetic" might reveal a certain (conscious or not) political liability,[545] it remains difficult to label these general

[543] Barsacq, cited by Flügge (1982) i. 265.
[544] Anouilh (1979), cited by Flügge (1982) i. 231.
[545] See Witt (1993); Fleming (2006).

literary themes as intentionally fascist. In my chapter, I have argued that Anouilh shifted the focus on the personal and psychological conflicts enacted in the tragedy, its inevitable outcome, and the disillusioned and cynical view of existence.

The different responses to and opposite readings of the play demonstrate the malleability of Sophocles' *Antigone* and the complexities of its conflicts, which escape a one-sided, fixed interpretation. The case of Anouilh's *Antigone* also shows the difficulties for an author to control all of a play's effects and to communicate a univocal message. Whether this was the author's intention or not, the interpretation of his *Antigone* changed through time because of the complex interplay between aesthetic, propaganda, and political ideologies in the period that immediately preceded and followed the end of the Second World War. Although his *Antigone* was not explicitly political, it was made political by the critical reception of the time, as well as by subsequent readings and appropriations that have transformed the Sophoclean drama into a political play of resistance and dissent. Today, *Antigone* has become the political play of protest and the epitome of the spirit of resistance also thanks to Anouilh's apparently subversive adaptation and its interaction with the history of the twentieth century.

3.4. After the Second World War

Over the decades that followed the Second World War, the success of Sophocles' tragedy on the modern stage did not decrease. However, the model of Greek-Western superiority inculcated by the Nazis was radically questioned in post-war performances. These later productions emphasised the "otherness" and foreignness of ancient Greece and rejected the idealisation of Greek superiority. At the same time, post-war performances challenged accurate or philological readings of classical works. A new attitude towards the Classics was established – one that repudiated "reverence" and associated notions of racial superiority in favour of political and highly contemporary readings.

Antigone premiered in post-war Germany in Cologne on 15 September 1945.[546] Few months later, on 15 February 1946, an *Antigone* in the translation of Hölderlin premiered in Hamburg.[547] It was staged by Heinrich Koch and Caspar Neher. This production challenged the Nazis' appropriation of Hölderlin as poet of the *Vaterland* and intended to communicate instead "der Aufruhr, das Politische, das Republikanische, das Revolutionäre, das Hölderlin der *Antigone* immer wieder nachsagt, beschworen".[548] Echoing Stroux's adaptation, Antigone wore a white costume whereas Creon was dressed with a "vermilion coat and trousers", representative of Oriental tyranny.[549]

After seeing the Hamburg production of *Antigone* in the translation of the German poet, Neher recommended Hölderlin's translation of the ancient play to Bertolt Brecht.[550] Only two years later, Neher collaborated in the production of Brecht's version of *Antigone*, staged in 1948 in post-war Switzerland. Neher also collaborated with Carl Orff for the setting of his *Antigonae* in 1949.[551]

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[546] Fischer-Lichte (2017), 186.
[547] To whom not much critical attention has been dedicated, as Castellari (2011), 156-57, notes. Some remarks can be found in Flashar (2009), 176-77; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 186-87.
[548] Benninghoff, *Die Welt* (29 March 1946), cited in Flashar (2009), 177, and translated in Fischer-Lichte (2017), 187: "The turmoil, the political, the republican, the revolutionary, which Hölderlin always saw in *Antigone*".
[549] See Fischer-Lichte (2017), 187.
[550] As Brecht (1988), 12, attests in an entry of his diary.
[551] See section 3.4.2. of this thesis.

Brecht's version represents a landmark moment in the political reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*. With Brecht's Marxist reading of the play, *Antigone* became established as a canonical drama of political resistance. Brecht expanded the political tradition of the play and shaped the defining features of a politicised *Antigone* that endure to the present day. Brecht's iconic adaptation, representative of anti-authoritarian and anti-fascist resistance, was therefore instrumental to the process of politicisation of the play that this thesis investigates.

3.4.1. Bertolt Brecht's *Antigone* (1948)

Brecht left a detailed account of his life and works, which he documented in his diaries (the *Arbeitsjournal*) and theoretical writings (such as the *Kleines Organon für das Theater* and his philosophical dialogue *Der Messingkauf*).[552] Moreover, Brecht discussed the first theatre production of his adaptation of *Antigone* in his 1949 *Antigonemodell 1948.* This "model book" includes not only the full text of *Antigone* and Brecht's notes, but also drawings by Neher and a sequence of images from the scene photographed by Ruth Berlau in 1948, for which Brecht composed captions in hexameters (the so-called *Brückenverse*, "bridge verses", which form the *Antigone-Legende*).[553] In addition, the *Modellbuch* explains Brecht's and Neher's choices for the setting, the costumes, way of acting and moving of the performers, and the stage directions.

Because of the abundance of theoretical material and notes to the adaptation, it is possible to identify clearly the agenda and intentions of Brecht's enterprise. Brecht denounced the distorting effects of an uncritical type of theatre and drama, such as the bourgeois drama and the ideological distortions imposed by the Nazis upon literary texts. Instead, he set out to politicise Sophocles' *Antigone*, chosen as a paradigmatic play of civil disobedience against the absolute, tyrannical power embodied by Creon.

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[552] For Brecht's journals, see Rorrison and Willet (1993), English edition. The Messingkauf's dialogue remained incomplete, see Brecht (2014), 1-96. A comprehensive selection of Brecht's theoretical notes and writings in English translation is collected in Willett's volume *Brecht on Theatre. The Development of an Aesthetic* (1964).

[553] Photographic documentation had already been adopted by Brecht in his previous works such as *Die Mutter* (1932), *Die Gewehre der Mutter Carrar* (1937), and *Was kostet das Eisen* (1939). See Guarino (2010), 40. In following years, Brecht wrote other model books, such as the *Couragemodell* (1949).

However, unlike Hasenclever's and Sérgio's earlier adaptations,[554] the political agenda of Brecht's *Antigone* is not clear-cut and univocal. Brecht claimed that Sophocles' *Antigone* "is the decided rejection of tyranny in favour of democracy" ("ist die betonte Absage an die Tyrannis und die Hinwendung zur Demokratie").[555] However, his *Antigone* is more nuanced and complicated than this over-simplified binary of Creon as the tyrant and Antigone as the (democratising) resistance. Rather than presenting Antigone's act in any simple sense as a timeless, unconditioned model of open resistance, Brecht brought attention to the limits, complicity, and weakness of his Antigone and questioned the validity and exemplarity of her heroic act in the context of 1945 Berlin. He showed that Antigone's fight for freedom, her denunciation of tyranny, and her sacrifice represent a model of resistance which, although brave, is destined to fail. Brecht advocated for change that comes from society as a whole and not from a single act and individual. It was Brecht's intention to offer his audience the critical tools to question dominant ideologies and, eventually, challenge them through his critical theatre.

Brecht believed that Sophocles' *Antigone* "was one of the greatest works of Western literature" ("gehört zu den größten Dichtungen des Abendlands").[556] Yet he questioned whether ancient Greek tragedy was still "intelligible to audiences living their lives according to quite different ideas" ("ob sie einem Publikum, das heute in ganz anderen Vorstellungen lebt, noch verständlich ist.").[557] The quest for Greek tragedy's applicability and appropriateness in a post-war world lies at the heart of Brecht's project, which unearthed the barbaric, ambivalent, and un-heroic elements of the ancient story and dissected the practical consequences and implications of an Antigone-like act applied to a contemporary context. Brecht's innovations heightened the play's anti-authoritarian potential in order to make it relevant to his contemporary

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[554] On these *Antigones*, see sections 3.1.1. and 3.2.3. of this thesis.
[555] Brecht (1988), 22. Brecht (2003a), 201. These notes to the adaptation, Brecht's *Antigone* and his *Antigonemodell* have been translated into English by Kuhn and Constantine, referred to as Brecht (2003a). All German quotations of Brecht's notes, diaries, letters, and *Antigonemodell* are taken from Hecht's 1988 edition, referred to as Brecht (1988), an edition which incorporates the stage directions and photos in the text of *Antigone*.
[556] Brecht (1988), 214. Brecht (2003a), 215-16.
[557] Brecht (1988), 214. Brecht (2003a), 215. Brecht refers especially to the different idea of "fate", which he eliminates in the modern version. This change, as we will see, represents a decisive deviation from the original.

society, thereby furthering the larger process by which *Antigone* became established as a play of political resistance.

Ultimately, Brecht was able to suggest a new, critical attitude towards the Classics and to demonstrate that it is possible to update a drama such as Sophocles' *Antigone* to post-war Germany and even to create a model for modern tragedy that is useful for the present. The success and applicability of this model will be questioned at the end of my chapter. It is indeed undeniable that Brecht's iconic version proved fundamental in creating the current interpretative model of *Antigone* as a play of political rebellion. Because of its influence, Brecht's adaptation paved the way for later authors who engaged politically with the ancient tragedy in many parts of the world. In this chapter, I shall explore the genesis, features, and implications of Brecht's creation of a political *Antigone* suitable to a post-war world.

1. The Historical and Practical Circumstances of Brecht's Production of *Antigone*

After six years spent in exile in Scandinavia and in the United States because of his communist affiliation, Brecht decided to return to Germany, "our harrowed and harrowing country" ("unserem unglücklichen und unglückschaffenden Land"), shortly after the collapse of the Nazi dictatorship.[558] On 31 October 1947 he fled to Paris, after being questioned about his relations with the communist party in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee.[559] From Paris Brecht moved to Zurich, where he hoped to find work at the *Schauspielhaus*.[560] In Zurich he re-established contact with Caspar Neher and a number of other friends and directors, including Hans Curjel, director of the *Stadttheater* in Chur, Switzerland.[561] However, since there was no prospect of work for him in Zurich, he accepted Curjel's offer to direct a play for the coming season in Chur. Brecht chose to stage the *Antigone* of Sophocles. It is possible

[558] Brecht (2003a), 203. Brecht (1988), 47.
[559] The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was established in 1938 to conduct investigations into alleged communist activities in the 1940s-50s.
[560] See Savage (2008), 150: "One of few European theatres to have continued staging his plays during the war".
[561] Caspar Neher, joint chief designer at the Zurich *Schauspielhaus*, was an old school friend of Brecht who had stayed in Germany and with whom he had worked before 1933. Brecht had already met Hans Curjel in Berlin before his exile in 1933. They had worked together on the 'Little' *Mahagonny* in Baden-Baden in 1927.

that Brecht had watched Anouilh's play in the States, but there is no evidence that he read it.[562]

While Brecht and his collaborators were working on *Antigone*, they were surrounded by the aftermath of the war: soldiers were missing, a high number of theatres were in ruin, people were exhausted, and millions were homeless or starving.[563] In this dispiriting context, Brecht had to re-establish his position as artist in front of German audiences and critics. Moreover, he was concerned with the creation of a new cultural tradition appropriate to the German-speaking theatre after Nazism.

Within a few weeks,[564] Brecht and Neher had finalised the staging and script of the play and had visited the old cinema, used as a theatre, in the small Swiss town of Chur. Rehearsals for *Antigone* started in Zurich early in January and then moved to Chur on 16 January 1948. The play premiered a month later, on 15 February 1948, with Helene Weigel, Brecht's wife, in the role of Antigone. Creon was interpreted by the young Hans Gaugler and Haemon was played by a younger actor, in contrast to the mature Weigel, who was 47 years old.[565]

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[562] See Fornaro (2012), 42.
[563] See Brecht (1988), 13: "Am Weihnachtsabend ist Cas mit Erika da. Wir arbeiten an der Antigone. Zuerst haben wir am Radio herumgedreht, aber die einzige deutsche Station, die wir fanden, gab endlose Listen von Namen vermißter Soldaten durch, und der Junge Neher ist in der URSS vermißt." Brecht (2003a), 198: "On Christmas Eve Cas and Erika come round. We work on the *Antigone*. First we twiddled the radio knob but the only German station we could find was broadcasting endless lists of names of missing soldiers, and Neher's son is missing in the USSR."
[564] As Brecht (1988), 12, documents in an entry of his diary.
[565] See Konstantinos (2006), 94-5, on the reactions of the critics regarding the actors' age difference. See illustration 7.

Fig. 7. Bertolt Brecht at the rehearsal of his play in Chur with Helene Weigel as Antigone and Hans Gaugler as Creon. Photo by Ruth Berlau. Riedel (2007), 187.

The premiere of the play was not a great success – it saw only five performances. Its reputation has been achieved retrospectively thanks to the documentation and photographs of the *Modellbuch*.[566] *Antigone* was produced only once more in full, this time in the small German town of Greiz in eastern Thuringia, in November 1951. Although Brecht composed a new (alternative) prologue for the production, *Antigone* remained a minor event in a modest theatre and was considered by some critics merely a preparatory work and preliminary study for the more renowned *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder* (1949).[567] Brecht himself referred to his *Antigone* in 1947 as "a routine piece of work" (*Fleißarbeit*).[568]

Brecht's use of Hölderlin's translation also proved controversial. Whereas some critics argued that Brecht made Hölderlin's text more comprehensible, other accused him of having distorted the meaning of the ancient drama.[569] Brecht took

[566] In his memoirs, Curjel (1977), 133-34, remembers the circumstances of this first production: the anonymity of the theatre, the small entrance fee, the modest production. See contemporary reviews in Brecht (1988), 195-209; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 201-3.
[567] See Brecht (1988), 12: "ich habe … *Antigonebearbeitung* fertiggestellt, da ich mit Weigel und Cas die Courage für Berlin vorstudieren möchte". This criticism may have been enhanced by the great expectations upon Brecht's return to Europe. See Savage (2008), 151.
[568] Hecht (1997), 803.
[569] See for example Barner (1987) and Kerenyi (1983). See further criticism in Doering (2010-2011), 156.

almost half of Hölderlin's text,[570] although he did not proceed consistently. Sometimes he deviated from Hölderlin's reinterpretation and employed the original Greek word order, whereas he incorporated other revisions literally. The changes and additions to the 1804 translation were indeed not casual; they rather served to emphasise the political dimension of the play and to critique the ideology of National Socialism.[571] The afterlife of Brecht's adaptation only began in the 1960s. The play was revived by the New York Living Theatre company in 1967 in Krefeld. Critics saw hints of contemporary events – not only in Europe, but also in Vietnam, Pakistan, and India.[572] Brecht's adaptation seemed to favour such an open approach and to encourage future re-evaluations. Thanks to Brecht's reinterpretation, the *Antigone* of Sophocles became *the* canonical drama of conscientious resistance to arbitrary and autocratic authority.

2. Why (Hölderlin's) *Antigone* and What Kind of *Antigone* in Post-War Germany?

Brecht believed that *Antigone* was a suitable post-war play and he found tragedy a good starting point "in the general ruin" (*in dem allgemeinen Verfall*) and "total moral and material collapse" (*totale materielle und geistige Zusammenbruch*) of Germany in the post-war era.[573] Precisely thanks to the "catastrophe" of the Second World War, Germany had acquired "a vague appetite for novelty" (*einen vagen Durst nach Neuem*).[574] Brecht emphasised the need to test new ideas and to imbue theatre with a new social and political function, distancing himself from the orthodox theatre as a consequence. Despite such an emphasis on novelty and renewal, he chose, for the targeted operation, precisely an ancient classical tragedy, *Antigone*, in the translation by Hölderlin.

As he suggests in the preface of the *Antigonemodell*, the choice of the material relied both on the possibility to raise interesting formal problems through the ancient

[570] Bunge (1957), 131, calculated that only the 19.5% of Hölderlin's verses are left unchanged, and a further 32.3% retains some – even vague – references. The remaining 48.2% has been changed by Brecht in decisive ways. On the presence of Hölderlin in Brecht's work, see Revermann (2013), 157-58; Doering (2010-11); Castellari (2011), 144-51.
[571] As noted by Savage (2008), 169.
[572] See section 3.5.1. of this thesis.
[573] Brecht (2003a), 203. Brecht (1988), 47.
[574] Brecht (2003a), 203. Brecht (1988), 47.

play and on its political relevance.[575] The choice of Hölderlin's text, appropriated by the Nazis during the war for its nationalistic appeal,[576] responded to Brecht's desire to distance himself from the propagandistic and traditional interpretations of the play and from the purely classical-humanist and bourgeois interest in Greek tragedy.

The almost redundant presence of three playwrights in the title makes the genealogy of Brecht's work clear: *Die Antigone des Sophokles. Nach der Hölderlinschen Übertragung für die Bühne bearbeitet von Bertolt Brecht*.[577] Critic Weisstein explains that Brecht's attention turned to Hölderlin thanks to his contacts with the composer Hanns Eisler, who set to music a number of poems by Hölderlin.[578] The decision was presumably motivated by Brecht's inability to use the original Greek, even though Ruth Berlau recalls seeing Brecht examining several translations of the play, including a text in Greek.[579] The fact that Brecht thought of Hölderlin's text as a "fairly faithful" (*ziemlich getreue*) translation of the original reveals that he did ignore the philological inaccuracies that critics identified in the translation.[580]

Whereas Savage finds it "self-evident" that Hölderlin's text "served him [Brecht] primarily as a window on to Sophocles' fable rather than as an end in itself",[581] it seems that Hölderlin's translation resonated with Brecht's own political and artistic view and did not simply serve as a means for understanding Sophocles. Given his little familiarity with ancient Greek, Brecht could have simply relied on Johann Jakob Christian Donner's literal translation of *Antigone*, the text used in the

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[575] Brecht (1988), 48: "Für das vorliegende theatralische Unternehmen wurde das Antigonedrama ausgewählt, weil es stofflich eine gewisse Aktualität erlangen konnte und formal interessante Aufgaben stellte." Brecht (2003a), 204: "The Antigone story was picked for the present theatrical operation as providing a certain topicality of subject matter and posing some interesting formal questions."

[576] See Flashar (2009), 141; 159-75; Castellari (2011), 158; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 166-81. Brecht speaks of "the nationalistic element intolerable to us", imposed by Hitler in the reading of German poets such as Schiller and Hölderlin; Rorrison and Willett (1993), 306.

[577] On the implications and problems of citation raised in this title, which allows Brecht to avoid plagiarism, see Savage (2006); (2008), 153-55; Taxidou (2008), 245.

[578] See Weisstein (1973), 597; Castellari (2011), 147-48.

[579] Berlau (1987), 200; translated in Savage (2008), 151: "I even saw a text in Greek, for Brecht had found someone who knew a bit of Greek." Ruth Berlau, photographer and writer, collaborated with Brecht and founded the Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv in Berlin. Whereas Brecht studied Latin, he did not study Greek at the *Realgymnasium* in Augsburg; on Brecht's education, see Hecht (1997), 25; Revermann (2016), 214-15.

[580] Brecht (2003), 200-1. Brecht (1988), 19. On the philological mistakes of Hölderlin's translation see Schadewaldt (1960), 770-78. As Castellari (2011), 165, notes, often Brecht keeps in his version "passi palesemente errati o di scarsa perspicuità".

[581] Savage (2008), 151.

Mendelssohn *Antigone*, which was popular and available at the time.[582] Instead, Brecht felt a special affinity with Hölderlin's translation, its *schwäbischer Tonfälle* and *gymnasiale Lateinkonstruktionen*, as well as the "Hegelian" aspects (*Hegelisch*).[583] Brecht was attracted, too, by the "strangeness" of the translation and its "astounding radicalism" (*erstaunlicher Radikalität*).[584] The text abounds with archaisms, allusions, a contorted syntax, and a "ritualized and medicalized language (fevered life, consumptive)".[585] It is precisely the "anti-classicism" and "strangeness" of Hölderlin's text which had led Brecht to choose this translation, which itself creates alienating distance. Brecht sensed the potential formal affinities with his new aesthetic ideas of "epic theatre", a self-conscious theatre which reflects on itself,[586] and his own Marxist perspective.

Like Marx, Brecht wanted to educate his audience and to uncover, through his political theatre, the "superstructures" of society, "the whole body of art, ideas, morality, etc., of any given society, which Marx saw as resting on certain basic economic relationships".[587] Brecht aimed at provoking in the spectators a sense of alienation and estrangement, calling into question what was familiar and accustomed, thus motivating the spectators to think critically and, eventually, change society and transform it into a new order. For Brecht, learning could only be activated through the spectators' detached and critical attitude. By contrast, the emotional identification and subsequent intrusions of feelings (*Einfühlung*) would produce a passive experience and prevent the spectators from learning.

Brecht renounced the ancient concepts of *sympatheia*, *mimesis*, and *catharsis*, which he considered antithetic to his ideal of "epic theatre". Instead, he targeted

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[582] It is likely that Brecht also made use of this translation; see Brown (1978), 82; Flashar (2009), 184, on the final line of the play.
[583] See Brecht's letter to his brother, Brecht (1988), 19: "sie hat etwas Hegelisches, das Du erkennen wirst, und einen Dir wohl nicht erkennbaren schwäbischen Volksgestus". See comments in Philipsen (2001), 32: Hölderlin's translation "rief beim Heimkehrer Brecht ein Gefühl der Wiedererkennung und des Einverständnisses".
[584] Brecht (2003a), 199. Brecht (1988), 12-3.
[585] Taxidou (2008), 248. On Hölderlin's translation, see Constantine (2001).
[586] Brecht first used the term "epic" in an essay from 1926 entitled "The modern theatre is the epic theatre". A systematic theory of epic theatre appeared in 1930 in his notes to the opera *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*; *The Street-Scene: Basic Model for an Epic Theatre* (1938).
[587] Brecht (1964), 23. Brecht turned to Marxism and socialism in the late 1920s. According to Marx, human society continuously changes and develops through class struggle. In order to replace the old (capitalistic) system with a new (communist) system it is necessary to educate and emancipate the people from "ideological superstructures".

precisely the Aristotelian theory of drama, which he presumably knew by general cultural osmosis. According to Aristotle, *mimesis* allows for an identification with the characters' emotions and is closely related to understanding (μανθάνειν) and pleasure (ἡδονή).[588] In watching a tragedy, the audience experiences the emotions of pity and fear but, at the same time, recognises that the events represented on the stage are only mimetic, even if hypothetically possible.[589] Therefore, by purging the emotions of pity and terror provoked by the representation of the painful, the whole theatrical experience produces *catharsis* or purification. By contrast, Brecht's public had to distance itself from the story and renounce distracting emotions, which would lead to an emphatic identification with the illusion of the story, rather than arouse the spectators' criticism.

In order to convey his didactic and political message to the realm of theatre and in order to inculcate in the spectators a critical attitude, Brecht adopted alienating techniques, the so called *V-Effekt*, also known as the theory of *Verfremdung*.[590] For instance, in the first prelude of *Antigone*, a board with the time and place on it – Berlin, April 1945 – was lowered above the backdrop wall, thus breaking the theatrical illusion and conveying a sense of alienation.[591]

[588] On *mimesis* and learning, see the considerations in Halliwell (2002), 177-206; Woodruff (2009), 612-27.
[589] Tragedy's subject matter should therefore be distant but at the same time realistic, otherwise the audience would not empathise with the characters and, consequently, not learn from the story. See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1453b.12, translated in Halliwell (2002), 186.
[590] Translated as "alienation effect", "defamiliarisation", or "estrangement"; see Brooker (2007), 216-17. See Brecht's essay "Short description of a new technique of acting which produces an alienation effect"; Brecht (1964), 136-47.
[591] See illustration 8.

Fig. 8. The prologue. Brecht (1977), 11.

In order to increase the sense of "alienation", actors were instructed to speak the lines in the third person, as if citing them, and apposite *Brückenverse* were given to them at rehearsals as mnemonic devices to be delivered "with the attitude of a narrator" ("in die Haltung von Erzählern").[592] Brecht attributed great importance to an actor's performance, movements, and expressions, described in details in the stage directions. A "single movement" was called by Brecht *gestus* and it was used as de-familiarising and distancing device, "a crucial performative act, in which the body and language both posit and estrange the actor on stage and within a broader network of socio-historical interactions".[593]

[592] Brecht (2003a), 208. Brecht (1988), 53.
[593] Taxidou (2008), 250. A gesture had to be memorable and reproducible, in order to be transformed into a model; it also served to declare the theatre's artifices and activate the audience's critical perception of the performance. On the *gestus* of Helene Weigel as Antigone bearing a door on her back, see Taxidou (2008), 251-54. See illustration 9.

Fig. 9. Helene Weigel as Antigone in front of Creon, Hans Gaugler. Fischer-Lichte (2017), 201.

According to Brecht, epic actors had to be as bad as possible, for very good actors would create distracting emotions.[594] Moreover, an actor did not have to represent a fixed character, but rather one that changes and is open to continuous alterations, so that multiple variants emerge. For example, Brecht's Antigone chooses to act (πράττειν, δρᾶσαι – *handeln*), whereas Ismene remains silent.[595] Both choices – silence or action – are equally possible: what matters is precisely that there exist alternative decisions amongst different possibilities and human actions are not pre-determined by fate nor by the gods. Brecht showed that the course of events is simply dependent upon human actions and man's ability to evaluate critically the situation and the best way to handle it.

The stage design also served to create distance and alienation. Brecht wanted to emphasise the barbaric aspects of the original, in order to oppose and undermine tragedy's canonical status as an idealised cultural and artistic form. In Brecht's and

[594] Each actor "instead of concentrating on what suits him and calling it 'human nature', must go above all for what does not suit him, is not his specialty." Brecht (1964), 197; 245.

[595] According to Konstantinos (2006), 135-36, Brecht replaces the question τί δράσω of the original with the question τί ποιήσω; although both terms seem synonymous they are, in fact, quite different. Brecht's theatre is not about δρᾶν or Aristotelian πράττειν, but about the Greek ποιεῖν, creating, producing, and developing a τέχνη. His characters do not simply need to act, dramatically, but they need to learn how to act by creating a skill (the critical attitude), according to which they will then be able to act in the proper way – whereas the actions of Sophocles dramatic personae are presented as inevitable, fated.

Neher's staging, four horse skulls were suspended from the top of four posts arranged in a circle; their presence on the stage conveyed a sense of the primitive and barbaric.[596]

Fig. 10. Neher's setting for Brecht's *Antigone*. Cairns (2017), 188.

Brecht himself claimed that the play belonged "in its entirety with the barbaric horses' skulls" ("die ganze *Antigone* gehört auf die barbarische Pferdeschädelstätte").[597] They are "the emblem of historical violence",[598] blatantly represented on the stage, thus offering to the spectators the image of animal sacrifice. This violent image represented an explicit attempt to depart from the idea of a highly civilised and advanced society, as fifth-century Athens could have been perceived by uncritical spectators and especially by spectators indoctrinated by Nazi ideology. Such a macabre design drew the audience to the archaic, ritualistic, and pre-civilising sphere of barbarism and animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifice was obviously common practice in Athens; horses, however, were not normally sacrificed. This image, then, served to emphasise the barbaric elements of the plot and to convey "a strong sense of war and waste … a

[596] See illustration 10. For a detailed analysis of the stage design (the *Nehersche Antigonebühne*), see Brecht (1988), 29-41; 51-2; Fuegi (1994), 491; Baugh (2007); Revermann (2016), 225-26.
[597] Letter from 18 January 1948, Brecht (2003a), 199; Brecht (1988), 17.
[598] See Taxidou (2008), 175; Doering (2010-2011), 151.

pointlessness, an emptiness".[599] It also served to pinpoint Brecht's belief that the Greeks, like the Germans, were not only characterised by reason and progress – as the Nazi propaganda wanted people to believe – but also by primitive barbarism, as proved by the horror of the war and Germany's imperialistic policy. Athens' imperialistic policy and subsequent fall offered an analogue for Germany, a nation which also proved "barbaric" and destroyed itself by aggression and expansion.[600]

The language, epic acting, setting, masks, and costumes all served this purpose: to eliminate the theatrical illusion and to declare openly the artifices and mechanisms behind theatre and society. In addition to these theatrical devices, Brecht added in his *Antigone* alien ideas and motivations absent in the original story, in order to "rationalise" it (Brecht's so-called *Rationalisierung*). Thus, Brecht historicised the Antigone story and transformed it into an allegory of the deficiencies of modern capitalistic society. He removed much of the play's ambiguities and created a more didactic message, by politicising the classical canonical text and modifying explicitly certain aspects of the plot.

3. Brecht's Changes to the Original: a New Story?

In Brecht's reinterpretation, Creon is unmistakably the tyrant. There is no final redemption for the inhuman king, presented as a violent profit-seeker. Brecht supplies a new motivation for the downfall of Oedipus' house and for the war against "remote" Argos: Creon's desire of conquering its grey metal.[601] Whereas in Sophocles the war is already finished and Creon prioritises the welfare of the *polis* and its safety, in Brecht's version the war is not over, and the king lies about its victorious outcome. Brecht's Creon represents the violence of war and power as well as the self-interest and greed of the ruling class. Such a negative characterisation serves to enhance Brecht's assertion that rulers only act according to their own advantage, unconcerned with the victims caused by their greed. It also gives Antigone a clear reason to motivate her political opposition, unlike in the original.

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[599] Revermann (2016), 226.
[600] See Taxidou (2007), 174. Brecht supposedly had some knowledge of the history of the fifth century (although *Antigone* was presumably performed before the defeat of Melos).
[601] The same motif can be found in Thucydides, book 1.100, and Brecht was possibly aware of it.

Therefore, the focus of the play shifts from the conflict between the individual and the state to the futile war against Argos, determined by Creon's imperialistic and brutal policy. By displaying the fall of the tyrant and the disintegration of the *polis*, Brecht's *Antigone* shows the structural inadequacy (*der Unzulänglichkeit*) of political constructions and economic forces behind the acquisition and self-dismantling of power as well as the surplus of violence necessary to bring an end to the war:

> In der *Antigone* wird nunmehr die Gewalt erklärt aus der Unzulänglichkeit. Der Krieg gegen Argos kommt von der Mißwirtschaft in Theben. Die Beraubten werden auf Raub verwiesen. Das Unternehmen übersteigt die Kräfte. Gewalttätigkeit, anstatt die Kräfte zusammenzuhalten, spaltet sie; das elementar Menschliche, zu sehr gedruckt, explodiert. Und wirft das ganze Auseinander und in die Vernichtung.
>
> In *Antigone* the violence is explained by inadequacy. The war against Argos derives from mismanagement in Thebes. Those who have been robbed have to point to the robbery themselves. The undertaking exceeds the strength available. Violence splits the forces instead of welding them together; basic humanity, under too much pressure, explodes, scattering everything with it into destruction.[602]

The Sophoclean catastrophe becomes, in Brecht's reinterpretation, an analysis of society's economic and political mechanisms. The king' absolute power, the capitalistic nature of the war, and the violence which scatters from it are central themes in Brecht's version. In Brecht's ideological reinterpretation, the two brothers do not kill each other but instead they fight side by side. They are both killed in the battle; whereas Eteocles dies fighting bravely as a hero, Polynices deserts as he hears of his brother's meaningless death and is slaughtered by Creon. Therefore, the king decrees that the body of the deserter Polynices, equalled to a "Freund des Argosvolks", an

[602] Brecht (1988), 15. Brecht (2003a), 199.

enemy, shall be left unburied (p. 20).[603] By denying burial not to a real war enemy of Thebes, but to a deserter killed by himself, Creon is clearly presented as a tyrant. His edict is an act of propaganda which is by no means exclusively restricted to Polynices – as is the case in Sophocles. Polynices is simply one man amongst the many who fell. As soon as the rebellion expands to the army, Creon does not hesitate to hang (p. 46) "in public the many [that] this aggrieved"); (pp. 57-8): "die vielen / Die das im Heer verübelten, gefaßt / und öffentlich gehängt". Creon's edict is symptomatic of his fear that Polynices' desertion could provide an example to others. At the same time, once he finds out that Antigone is responsible for the burial, Creon gives his niece the possibility to "avoid a heavy punishment" if she publicly says that she is sorry (p. 21). Like Anouilh's Creon, he offers the heroine the possibility to save herself, but she refuses, determined to set "an example" through her open rebellion.[604]

Further departures from the Sophoclean original include the expanded role of Haemon's brother, Megareus, and the omission of Eurydice. These changes prevent the audience from empathising with Creon's misfortune. The seer Tiresias is transformed into "a good observer and for that reason capable of foretelling certain things" ("ein guter Beobachter und deshalb in der Lage, einiges vorauszusagen"), who analyses the symptoms of the government's deficiencies and unmasks the ruler's ideological manipulation of the truth and the official rhetoric of profit. He infers that the war is still been fought for materialistic and practical reasons: many spears are being made and army fleeces are being sewn (p. 52). Finally, the Chorus is no longer a group of wise Theban elders but is converted into a group of Creon's collaborators.[605] Towards the end of the tragedy, a wounded messenger announces that Argos has become "a grave" after the bloody battles fought not only by men, but even by women and children, all guided in vain by Megareus. Even the one son, Megareus, on whom Creon still relies, has been killed. Upon reporting the tragic events, the messenger dies. Whereas in the original Creon is deeply moved by the seer's prophecies, in Brecht's version Creon decides to free Antigone not because of fear of the gods' laws, but only

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[603] As in the original, Creon defines his friends (*philoi*) and enemies (*echthroi*) according to political and economic reasons rather than familial relations. All German quotations of Brecht's *Antigone* are taken from Hecht's 1977 edition.

[604] According to Chancellor (1979), 89: "This is where Brecht and Anouilh meet."
[605] Brecht (1988), 215. Brecht (2003), 216.

in the hope to be reconciled the last son that he has, Haemon. But he arrives too late, after Antigone has hanged herself; Haemon then kills himself in front of his father's eyes. After his death, the Elders also rebel, aware of their imminent destruction.[606]

Creon's last words confirm that he has not changed his egoistic and tyrannical attitude. Although he is forced to surrender, he claims (p. 50): "one more battle and Argos would be in the dust"; (p. 63) "Noch eine Schlacht / und Argos läg am Boden!" He even wishes that Thebes will be destroyed with him (p. 50), thus resembling the final days of Hitler.[607] Throughout the tragedy, Brecht explicitly refers to Hitler's Germany and recognises that "the parallel is obvious" ("die Parallele ist deutlich").[608] His play shows that wars are determined by economic questions of profit and imperialistic greed, drawing explicit parallels with the Second World War. Argos is turned into a "Stalingrad",[609] and Creon is addressed by his lackeys as *mein Führer*.[610] Brecht shows that Thebes' war is Creon's personal war, as much as the Second World War was Hitler's war.[611] The analogy with the contemporary reality is made clear in the prologue, set in Berlin in the closing hours of the war, in April 1945. The inclusion of a contemporary setting and National Socialist ideology serves Brecht's intention to distance the audience from the ancient story and, at the same time, to alienate "the spectators from this ideology, dismantling and exposing it while probing why and how it could have worked".[612]

In the prologue, two nameless sisters leave their air-raid shelter and return home. As they hear screams coming from outside, they discover that their brother, who had deserted, has been hanged from a meat hook. The "second sister" prepares to aid him, in the hope that he is still alive. However, the "first sister" dissuades her, claiming that if she goes and sees, she will be seen too (p. 6). If the actions of the first sister are moved by a "strategy of survival",[613] the second sister, too, only hopes to save the life

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[606] Brecht (2003), 215.
[607] See Cairns (2017), 192.
[608] Brecht (2003a), 202. Brecht (1988), 23.
[609] Brecht (2003a), 202. Brecht (1988), 23: "Argos wird ein Stalingrad von heute".
[610] Gray (1961), 95, describes Brecht's Creon as "a flatly rapacious caricature of Hitler".
[611] Both Antigone (p. 29: "ANTIGONE: Doch, deiner [Krieg]") and the Chorus (p. 55: "DIE ALTERN: Den deinen!") assert that Argos' war is Creon's war.
[612] Fischer-Lichte (2017), 197.
[613] See Cairns (2017), 189. Silva (2017a), 407, speaks of Brecht's "anti-heroic version of the opening scene in Sophocles".

of her brother. Therefore, the second sister is motivated by a much more contingent necessity rather than by a moral or religious concern, thus showing immediately the distance between Brecht's and Sophocles' *Antigone*. Questioned by an SS man, the first sister denies knowledge of the "traitor", thus acquiescing to his murder. Yet, the SS man sees the second sister holding a knife, preparing to cut the rope off her brother's neck – or perhaps to stab the guard?[614]

The "Berlin 1945" Prelude was deleted in the 1951 production and replaced with a new Prologue, a single speech delivered by Tiresias, which simply introduces the roles and names of the characters that might be otherwise unknown to the audience, since they are taken from a poem of "thousands of years ago" ("tausende Jahre alt").[615] It is possible that Brecht was dissatisfied with the old Prologue, as its too obvious and categorical analogy to the present situation undermined the alienating effect of his "epic theatre". The new Prologue also reflects a shift of focus. The 1948 Prologue restricted the moral issue to Antigone's deed and personal responsibility, leaving the possibility of a redemption for the "second sister" open. The changed version, recited in 1951, when the events described in the first Prologue were more remote, encourages the audience to reflect more broadly on "the recent past". Thus the new prologue expands the reach of the play and places further emphasis on the inhumanity, violence, and sacrifices required by any war for its economic profit – topics that are strikingly relevant today.

4. Antigone's "Heroism" in 1945

Despite the obvious associations with present-day reality, which could reduce the "alienating distance" necessary in order to learn from the story, Brecht believed that, in *Antigone*, the "historical remoteness" (*historische Entrücktheit*) forbids an

[614] By choosing to go outside, the second sister would have to wound, if not kill, the soldier first, thus moving the narrative away from the sphere of familial obligation and entering the realm of crime. See Savage (2008), 178. On the theatricality of this prologue, see Guarino (2010), 39; Savage (2008), 160-61.
[615] Brecht (2003a), 218. Brecht (1988), 64.

identification with the main character.[616] In the preface to his own *Modellbuch* Brecht explained that he refused to equate Antigone with German resistance fighters who fought against the Nazis.[617] If Antigone were to be a sympathetic resistance fighter, Brecht would have not achieved the desired effect of detachment and critical attitude required by his "epic theatre". Nor could *Antigone* be interpreted as a "moral play" or as representative of religion, humanity, or the individual in relation to the state. Rather, she is presented as a privileged upper-class woman who has also been complicit in Creon's crimes. As the Chorus acknowledge, Antigone has eaten of the bread that was baked in Thebes' royal palace (p. 48): "Sie hat einst / Gegessen vom Brot, das in dunklem Fels / Gebacken war". She rebelled only at the last moment, when her own interests were violated (p. 48):

> Nicht ehe die letzte
> Gedulf verbraucht war und ausgemessen der letzte
> Frevel, nahm des unsehenden Odipus
> Kind vom Aug die altersbrüchige Binde
> Um in den Abgrund zu schauen.
>
> (p. 38) Not until the last
> Patience was consumed and measure out the last
> Criminal act, did the child of unseeing Oedipus
> Remove the long since threadbare blindfold from her eyes
> To look into the abyss.

Whereas Creon's brutal policy should have offered Antigone an immediate, political reason to dissent, she rebelled against Creon only when her own brothers were killed. Brecht's Antigone belongs to the elite, that place which the Guard describes as (p. 17)

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[616] Brecht (1988), 48: "Das alte Stück durch seine historische Entrücktheit nicht zu einer Identifizierung mit der Hauptgestalt einlud." Brecht (2003a), 204: "The old play was historically so remote as to tempt nobody to identify himself with its principal figure."

[617] Brecht (1988), 48: "Die große Figur des Widerstands im antiken Drama repräsentiert nicht die Kämpfer des deutschen Widerstands, die uns am bedeutendsten erscheinen müssen." Brecht (2003a), 204: "The great character of the resister in the old play does not represent the German resistance fighters who necessarily seem most important to us."

"unhealthy place … where the high / Are scrapping with the mighty"; (p. 24) "ein ungesunder Ort, wo Hohe sich / mit Hohen in den Haaren liegen!" Brecht's Antigone asserts that she would rather live in a ruined Thebes than in a conquered Argos (p. 33), thus implying that she, too, guards her own well-being, and would prefer to see Thebes ruined than to live in a foreign city. Through this confession, absent in Sophocles' original, Antigone loses her moral stance and is transformed into a mere victim. Her resistance illustrates the insufficiency of man's actions in front of man's own monstrosity and reveals that the responsibility for the war also lies with the ruling class – including Antigone and the wealthy member of the Chorus – which has caused the final defeat of Thebes through its internal divisions and collaborationism.

Therefore, rather than the mainstream German resistance, Antigone's act and Haemon's rebellion reflect the failed conspiracy of 20 July 1944 led by Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, which unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Hitler and remove the Nazi party from power.[618] Like the aristocratic Stauffenberg, Antigone belongs to the royal family; Haemon too is a commander of the army who opposes the tyrant and attempts to encourage a popular rebellion. By showing the failure of their rebellion, Brecht highlights that the act of defiance of a single aristocrat is insufficient in the context of Berlin 1945. Antigone can act, but it is too late; a broader change must be advocated from within society. Her heroic act remains "a symbolic gesture", an abstract and futile act that illustrates the impossibility to change society.[619] If it bears any importance today, it is because of its "symbolism and publicity value",[620] not because it can actually change reality. Antigone admits that her sacrifice is dictated by the desire to set a counteracting "example" (p. 28, *Beispiel*) to Creon's paradigmatic punishment. Her rebellion is simply the expression of a malcontent that comes within the royal palace of Thebes and lacks the pure heroism of Sophocles' Antigone.

Although he questioned Antigone's heroism and its applicability in a modern context, Brecht still showed his admiration towards her character, for example in the poem "Antigone" which prefaced the program of the play's production in Chur.[621] Whereas Creon is clearly presented as the tyrant, Brecht's attitude towards Antigone

[618] See Kuhn and Constantine (2003), 220.
[619] See Philipsen (1988) 13-5; Savage (2008), 170.
[620] Cairns (2017), 196.
[621] Brecht (2003a), 202-3. Brecht (1988), 6.

was more ambivalent.[622] In his notes, he praised the "great morality of her act … moved by a deep humanity" (*tiefe Menschlichkeit*), "an act of open resistance" (*offenen Widerstand*). [623] Moreover, in Brecht's version, Antigone buries the corpse of Polynices not because of her religious obligation towards the unwritten laws of the gods, but to make a clear resistance act against tyranny, terror, and violence. The *philia* towards her brother has a political relevance and expands in a broader rebellion against Creon's war. Brecht's Antigone unmasks Creon's violence, his nationalist rhetoric, and his entire regime, as based on mismanagement, exploitation, and lies. She warns the people of Thebes against the unjust war in which they are being sacrificed for the tyrant's profit rather than defending the authority of divine law.[624] Whereas Creon attempts to justify the war against Argos on the grounds that it was a defensive war, Antigone claims that this is Creon's personal war (p. 27), motivated by his lust for money and power:

> (p. 32) ANTIGONE
> Immer droht ihr Herrschenden doch, die Stadt würd uns fallen
> Hinfallen würd sie uneins, ein Mahl den andern und Fremden
> Und wir beugen die Nacken euch und schleppen euch Opfer, und hinfällt
> Also geschwächt, ein Mahl den Fremden, die Stadt und.
>
> (p. 23) ANTIGONE
> You, the rulers, threaten and threaten the city will fall
> At odds, will founder and feast on it others and foreigners
> And we bow our necks and fetch you the sacrifices and thus
> Weakened our city founders and foreigners feast on it.

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[622] On Brecht's ambivalent representation of Antigone, see Taxidou (2007), 174; Savage (2008), 170-71; Cairns (2016), 139.
[623] Brecht (2003a), 216. Brecht (1988), 215.
[624] Antigone asks (p. 24): "Where are the youths, the men? Are they not coming back?" (p. 33: "Wo sind die Jungen, die Männer? Kommen sie nicht mehr?"). The Elders will employ almost the same words after Tiresias has unveiled the truth about the "early victory" of Thebes (p. 42): "When are the young men coming home / to the city empty of men?" (p. 53: "Wann / Kehren die Jungen zurück zur / Männerleeren Stadt?").

In the exchange with her uncle, which becomes an evaluation of political and diplomatic calculations, Brecht's Antigone condemns the injustice and futility of war, which can only lead to a circle of violence, an escalation of more and more violence from which, in the end, nothing remains (p. 22): "Who seeks power / Drinks of salty water, he cannot desist but must / Drink it and drink it."; (p. 30): "Welcher nämlich die Macht sucht / trinkt vom salzigen Wasser, nicht einhalten kann er, weiter / Muß er es trinken." Brecht's Antigone warns Creon and the Elders that they will soon cause the destruction of the *polis* since internal and external violence are mutually connected (p. 23): "When you have need of violence abroad / Then you'll have need of violence at home"; (pp. 30-1) "wo's der Gewalt gegen andere brauchet / Gegen die Eignen braucht's der Gewalt dann". The parallel with Nazi Germany, but also with many parts of the world today and in recent history, is evident.

Therefore, Sophocles' *Antigone* is transformed by Brecht into a condemnation of the violence and ideology of National Socialism as well as an indictment of those ordinary Germans who failed to act under Hitler's regime and gave tacit consent to his crimes. At the same time, Brecht shows that the "pure" heroism of a Sophoclean Antigone is no more conceivable in a modern, post-war, and post-fascist context. As long as the *polis* is guided by rulers such as Creon (or Hitler), any opposition against tyranny will be too late, the sacrifice of the individual will be useless, and Antigone's resistance will remain, at best, a symbolic (but futile) political act. A "modern" Antigone story is thus necessarily implicated with violence, power struggle, economic profit, and barbarism. In front of such a brutal violence, Antigone's humane act loses significance. Antigone herself (p. 51) "saw everything" but she "could help nobody but the enemy" (p. 63: "die alles sah / Konnte nur noch helfen dem Feind"). Brecht himself did not act but decided to flee Germany rather than stay and face certain death. He watched the events from a distance, during his exile. Brecht's own choice to flee abroad may suggest that it is ultimately preferable to stay alive and resist through one's works rather than to commit suicide for one's principle – even though it is questionable whether his works and poetry were adequate "weapons" against the Nazis. By politicising the Antigone story, Brecht was able to question his own choice amongst the various possibilities of actions available at the time and to address questions of collective guilt and complicity.

5. Gods and Fate (μοῖρα – *Schicksal*)

The concept of a predetermined fate and the presence of the gods, which have such a central importance in Sophocles' play, are incompatible with Brecht's theory of "epic theatre" and with his historically materialistic worldview. In opposition to both the Aristotelian notion of drama (which produces distracting emotions and uncritical identification with the characters) and to what Brecht calls "the bourgeois narcotic business" (a theatre dominated by petty-bourgeois morality and ideology, only interested in selling superficial entertainment presented "in a magical way"),[625] Brecht's epic theatre is deprived of references to supernatural events, which he considered unreal and illusionistic.

Accordingly, in Brecht's *Antigone,* everything that is mythical or magical in Sophocles' play is given an historical justification. In the description of the Guard, the swirl of the wind is deprived of any divine connotation: rather, the guard was simply asleep when the second burial was performed.[626] The ancient ideas of fate (*moira, tyche*) and necessity (*ananke*) are replaced with individual responsibility. Whereas belief in an unalterable fate would induce people to accept social situations as tragic and unavoidable, Brecht intended to show that man alone is responsible for his own fate ("das Schicksal der Menschen [ist] der Mensch selber")[627] and human behaviour is "alterable; man himself [is presented] as dependent on certain political and economic factors and at the same time as capable of altering them."[628]

Brecht suggested that this result (the "rationalisation" of the play) was achieved naturally as the story progressed:

> Was das dramaturgische angeht, eliminiert sich das Schicksal sozusagen von selbst, laufend … Nach und nach, bei der fortschreitenden Bearbeitung der

[625] See Aristotle, *Poetics* 6, 1449b 20-5; Brecht (1964), 188.
[626] Brecht (1977), 47; 26-27. Brecht (2003), 36; 19. In the original (417-20), the swirl of the wind is associated with the gods.
[627] Brecht (1988), 214. Brecht (2003), 216.
[628] Brecht (1964), 86.

> Szenen, taucht aus dem ideologischen Nebel de höchst realistische Volkslegende auf.
>
> As far as dramatic composition is concerned, 'fate' eliminates itself all along the line of its own accord … gradually, as the adaptation of the scenes progresses, the highly realistic popular legend emerges from the ideological fog.[629]

Brecht was interested in uncovering the "realistic" core behind the Sophoclean drama, its popular character (the *Volkslegende*). The "popular legend" of the myth only emerged if the "ideological fog" (the magical element and fate) was dissolved. The *Rationalisierung* of the ancient drama thus reduced the gods to a "folkloric" element: only Bacchus, who represents the pleasures of the flesh, appears in Brecht's tragedy and is celebrated in a popular and wild feast propagandistically organised by the king to celebrate the (apparent) victory of Thebes.[630] Furthermore, the "rationalisation" allowed Brecht to reinterpret the Greek concept of "fate" politically, as a "construct of society" or "opium of the people" (in Marxist terms), behind which human crimes are camouflaged.

Although the Greek concept of fate and the intervention of the gods were considered by Brecht merely "ideological" constructs, they are so closely interwoven with the speech and action of the Sophoclean characters that it is difficult, if not impossible, to dissolve or neutralise all references to them. As Brecht himself admitted, the "rationalisation" of the play is not complete.[631] His version shows a constant tension between the "rationality" and "barbarism" equally intrinsic in human nature.

For example, Brecht's Antigone refuses to believe in the "terrible force" of fate (praised by the members of the original Chorus at lines 951-54):

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[629] Brecht (1988), 12. Brecht (2003a), 198.
[630] Brecht (1988), 12: "Von den Göttern bleibt der lokale volksheilige, der Freudengott". Brecht (2003a), 197: "of the gods only the local popular deity, the god of joy, remains".
[631] See Brecht (1988), 17: "Das Stück ist ja keineswegs durchrationalisiert." Brecht (2003a), 199: "Of course, the play has by no means yet undergone the process of thorough rationalisation." Sceptical judgements in regard to Brecht's rationalisation are expressed by Flashar (2009), 182-83; Pöggeler (2004), 179-80; Savage (2008), 165-66.

(p. 47) ANTIGONE
Nicht, ich bitt euch, sprecht vom Geschick.
Das weiß ich. Von dem sprecht
Der mich hinmacht, schuldlos; dem
Knüpft ein Geschick! Denkt nämlich nicht
Ihr seid verschont, ihr Unglückseligen.
Andere Körper, Zerstückte
Werden euch liegen, unbestattet, zu Hauf um den
Unbestatteten.

(pp. 36-7) ANTIGONE
Do not, I beg you, speak of fate.
I know it. Speak of him
Who lays me out, innocent, for death. Knit him
A fate! For do not think
Unhappy souls, you will be saved.
Other bodies, hacked
Will lie in heaps unburied around
That one unburied.

In the *agon* with Creon, Brecht's Antigone goes as far as denying the authority of the gods, if they have truly dictated such an order:

(p. 34): KREON
Immer nur die Nase neben dir siehst du, aber des Staats
Ordnung, die göttliche, siehst du nicht.
ANTIGONE
Göttlich mag sie wohl sein, aber ich wollte doch
Lieber sie menschlich, Kreon, Sohn des Menökeus.

(p. 25) CREON
Always all you see is the nose in front of you. The state's

Order, that is from God, you do not see.
ANTIGONE
From God it may be but I'd rather have it
Human and humane, Creon, Menoeceus' son.

Here Antigone expresses disillusionment towards the superior laws of the gods evoked by Creon, and claims that she has faith in human rationality.[632] However, in the dialogue with her sister Ismene, Antigone describes her act as holy (*heilig*):

(p. 17): Gestillt wer ich liegen
Mit den Stillen. Hinter mich hab ich
Heiligs gebracht.

(p. 11): I will be quietened
Lying with the quiet ones. Behind me I will have
Accomplished what is holy.

In her final *kommos*, Antigone reiterates this idea (p. 36): "But all I did was do / In holiness what is holy." (p. 46: "Und doch hab ich nur Heiligs / Heilig betrieben."), as in the original (τὴν εὐσεβίαν σεβίσασα, 943). Therefore, in Brecht's worldview, man can still be "saint" but, paradoxically, in a profane and secular sense which demonstrates its own limitations. Antigone's sacrifice, even though "holy" and representative of man's ability to act "humanly", is ultimately useless and comes too late.

6. τί δράσω; Man's Potential to Learn (μανθάνειν – wissen) and Err (ἁμαρτία – Fehler)

In Brecht's play, the success or disaster of man is simply determined by man's own choices and judgements rather than by fate or by the gods. Such individual

[632] Brecht's Antigone nonetheless invokes the laws of the gods in her speech (p. 28).

responsibility is not absent in the ancient version, in which Antigone is destroyed by her αὐτόγνωτος ὀργά (875). Similarly, the Chorus emphasise Creon's own personal agency and responsibility in the catastrophe (1259-60) – although the gods have also "struck him" and caused his ruin (1272-74).[633] In Sophocles, the Greek concept of *manthanein* is closely connected with human vulnerability and suffering: the more man suffers, the more he learns (πάθει μάθος, 104). In Brecht, Creon's suffering comes from his own misjudgements and *hamartia* (*Fehler*) and the gods have no responsibility. Creon's faulty "economy" has led to an uncontrolled appropriation of violence and all-consuming war, whose duration and intensity he had wrongly estimated. His devastating mismanagement is only the symptom of his excessive lust for power, which also characterises the members of the Chorus who follow his orders. The stupidity (*Dummheit*) of Creon becomes evident when Creon makes fun of the seer by moving around him and making foolish gestures; for example, he imitates the flying of the birds by drawing an imaginary line with his stick. The derision of the seer is executed through four gestures, described in details in the *Modellbuch*, which make Creon look like a clown.[634]

Through this negative representation of Creon and the Chorus, Brecht encourages his contemporary audience to understand that society cannot change unless man thinks and acts critically. Brecht believes that his theatre, the theatre of the scientific age, can ultimately provide the audience with the desire for knowledge (*Wissensbegierde*) and the trained criticism necessary to understand political reality, and, eventually, transform it into what he calls "an act of liberation" (*Befreiungsakt*).[635] His characters can learn (μανθάνειν or *wissen*) to master their fate by developing a critical ability (*technê*) and understanding of power and its mechanisms.

Brecht's characters nonetheless seem unable to understand the mechanisms of society and their personal agency is minimised. Neither Creon nor the Chorus is capable of employing their rational skills and, driven by greed and ambition, cause their own destruction. The action of Antigone, too, comes too late, and does not have

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[633] In the original, a man's ruin is partially caused by himself (Tiresias asserts that error is common to all mankind, 1023-24), by his own *hybris* and false hopes (*elpis*), which push man to exchange good for bad (617; 64), and by a hereditary guilt (856-57). In Brecht's version, the elders do not express the idea that Antigone's tragic fate is determined by a recurrent pattern of suffering.
[634] Brecht (1988), 139.
[635] Brecht (1964), 41.

any effect or influence on the course of events. The didactic message of Sophocles' final Chorus is altered and radicalised by Brecht. Between the slow learning process of man and historical dynamics there is an unbridgeable abyss:

> (p. 63) Denn kurz ist die Zeit
> Allumher ist Verhängnis, und nimmer genügt sie
> Hinzuleben, umdenkend und leicht
> Von Duldung zu Frevel und
> Weise zu werden im Alter.

> (p. 51) For time is short
> And disaster all around and never enough of time
> To live on thoughtlessly and easily
> From compliance to crime and
> Become wise in old age.

The final statement of the Brechtian Chorus proves to be the direct opposite of that of the Sophoclean Chorus and summarises the features of Brecht's politicisation of the play. In the original, the Chorus praises wisdom, which man can achieve through the experience of old age and through submission to the gods (1348-53):

> (Χορός:) πολλῷ τὸ φρονεῖν εὐδαιμονίας
> πρῶτον ὑπάρχει· χρὴ δὲ τά γ' εἰς θεοὺς
> μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν· μεγάλοι δὲ λόγοι
> μεγάλας πληγὰς τῶν ὑπεραύχων
> ἀποτείσαντες
> γήρᾳ τὸ φρονεῖν ἐδίδαξαν·

Brecht has changed the meaning of these lines, transforming them from instructive to pessimistic and nihilistic:[636] time is too short, nothing has been learnt, and there is neither possibility nor capability for reconciliation.

At the same time, Brecht shows that the final tragedy could have been avoided and it is the result of a conscious, self-destructive choice. It is human greed and lust which ultimately transform man into an *ungeheuer* creature, a "monster" to himself, responsible for such devastation and crimes. The human being who "bows the neck of his fellowmen" (p. 25: "beugt er dem Mittmensch den Nacken"), who "treads his own kind" ("hart auf seinesgleichen tritt er"), is transformed into a brutal monster. Such a pessimistic view of human capacity, in the wake of destruction left by Second World War, distinguishes Brecht's *Antigone* from other versions, and allows the author to emphasise the more violent aspects of human behaviour.

The motifs of violence and self-destruction resurface in Brecht's rewriting of the famous first *stasimon* or 'Ode to Man' (pp. 17-8; lines 332-75). Brecht followed Hölderlin's second translation of the Chorus and expanded Hölderlin's notion of *ungeheuer* even further,[637] to the extreme that man becomes a monster to himself, as the events of Second World War have proved. The word refers no longer to the astonishment over the manifold possibilities of human skills and arts, but rather recalls specifically the brutal violence and uncivilised behaviour toward fellow humans. Furthermore, Brecht's version reproduces the Sophoclean list of human skills such as seafaring, agriculture, hunting, and taming – which can be easily paralleled to scientific achievements of the twentieth century, such as the atomic bomb and high-speed machines.

About two thirds of the Chorus follow Hölderlin almost to the letter, whereas in the second half Brecht adds twelve lines, which most obviously and deliberately transfigure the Sophoclean original:

(p. 25) Tritt er hervor

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[636] As Flashar (2009), 184, notes, the very final line ("Weise zu werden im Alter") corresponds to the Donner 1839 edition (p. 202), used for the 1841 Donner-Tieck-Mendelssohn production. The other lines distance themselves from both the original and from the editions of Hölderlin available at the time: they are Brecht's own invention. Steiner (1984), 173, defines this "a characteristic Brechtian corrigendum to Sophocles".

[637] See section 1.4.4. of this thesis.

Hart auf seinesgleichen tritt er. Nicht den Magen
Kann er sich füllen allein, aber die Mauer
Setzt er ums Eigene, und die Mauer …
So, ungeheuer
Wird er sich selbst.

(p. 18) When he steps forth
He treads on his own kind, hard. By himself alone
His belly will never be filled but he builds a wall
Around what he owns and the wall
Must be torn down …
Monstrous thereby
He becomes to himself.

This Chorus remind the audience of the inevitable catastrophic outcome of men's actions – the horrors of the war and the atomic bomb.[638] Man's disintegration is predictable: man has proved in too many occasions to be the responsible for his own destruction. Brecht's crucial interest, as emerges in this Chorus, lies in the destructive potential that each *ungeheuer* individual can engender to fulfil his own self-realisation. In both the Greek and the adapted version, man is presented as irremediably limited – because of his own inadequacy (in Brecht's worldview) and because of the caprices of external fate as well as man's own mistakes (in Sophocles' tragedy).[639] And yet both the original and Brecht's version insist on the existence of a kind of justice or force in human affairs that punishes presumption (*hybris*) – but does not always reward good. In Sophocles this principle is determined by the gods, in Brecht by humanity itself. In both cases, Creon is eventually punished for his wrongdoings.

[638] It is difficult to establish the extent to which Brecht was referring to the Holocaust in particular – after all, Brecht was writing only two years after the horrors of the Holocaust had been uncovered and his play is more concerned with the dynamics of society and capitalism, as well as with the Germans' failure to oppose the situation.
[639] In Sophocles' worldview, man's ruin is caused by an unpredictable fate and by an inherited guilt, as well as by man's own inadequacy, arrogance (*hybris*), and mistakes (*hamartia*).

7. Brecht's Choruses: Ἔρως – *Geist der Lüste im Fleisch*

Not only in the first *stasimon* but also in the following choruses, Brecht intervenes decisively and changes their substance almost completely. In dealing with the Chorus, Brecht stumbled upon a technical problem. Greek choruses normally invoke, in their songs, higher authorities such as the gods, presented as superior to man and destined to account for his destiny; such invocations are in stark contrast with Brecht's theory of *Rationalisierung* and epic theatre. Nevertheless, the existence of a Chorus, a collective voice commenting on the action, appealed to Brecht's theatre aesthetics. These recurring choral partitions served Brecht's "epic" intention to repeatedly interrupt the narration and offered the author an artificial mode of communication useful for achieving *Verfremdung*, alienation. The Chorus is thus used as anti-realistic stage device and is given a triple function: it comments upon the events and plays a significant role as political agent and theatrical device. The Chorus' "non-intervention" and acquiescence to the ruler are ultimately instrumental in causing the downfall of Oedipus' house.[640]

Moreover, Brecht refused to present the members of the Chorus as old, as in Sophocles. Rather, the wise Chorus of Theban elders of the original is turned into a wealthy group of four middle-aged men, characterised by greed and lust as much as Creon, only interested in getting rich from the war, unconcerned with the welfare of the *polis*. Their faces present ravages that show "the habit of commanding" (*die Gewohnheit zu herrschen*).[641] They wear primitive masks, large and squared, with hairs attached to them.[642] It was Brecht's intention to provoke and astonish his audience through such artificial masks and through the macabre scenery.

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[640] See Brecht (1977), 84. On the Brechtian choruses see Revermann (2013).
[641] Brecht (2003a), 208. Brecht (1988), 53.
[642] In the stage directions, Brecht connects the masks with Bacchus: "in the left foreground is a board for props, with Bacchic masks on sticks" (*Bacchusstabmasken*). See Brecht (2003a), 206-7; Brecht (1988), 51. See illustration 11. On Brecht's use of masks, inspired by Greek and Asian theatre, see Revermann (2016), 223-27.

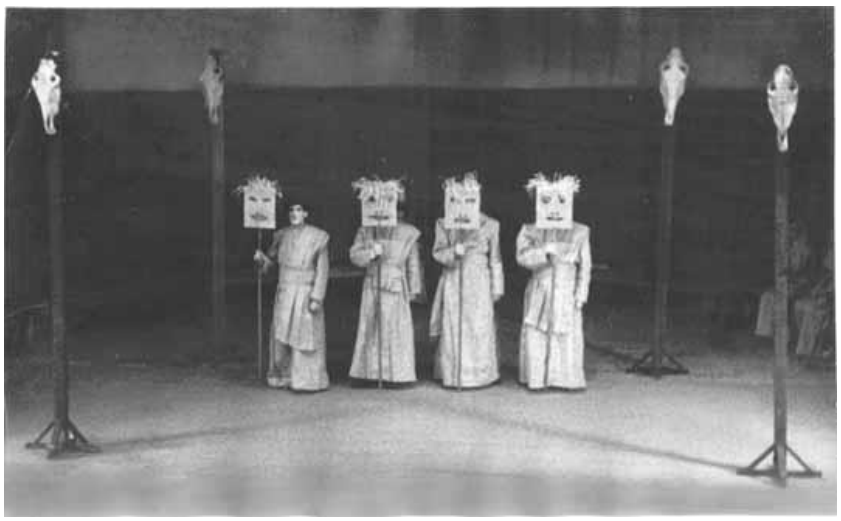

Fig. 11. Brecht's Chorus in *Antigone*. Fischer-Lichte (2017), 199.

In this way, Brecht historicised and rationalised the Sophoclean Chorus, both to show the intra-aristocratic struggle which dominates Thebes and to suggest an analogy with the complicity of the German people in the years of Second World War. Even though the members of the Chorus are not fully aware of Creon's crimes, they uncritically follow the king and rebel only at the end (pp. 44-5). They advise the king on political matters and suggest he should not rule too harshly, lest the people rise up and overthrow his government (p. 36).

Brecht's Chorus, "outdated, primitive, and barbarian, an inferior and unenlightened stage of human kind",[643] represents one of the most striking departures from the original and from Hölderlin's translation (which follows the original more closely, by portraying the Chorus as old and wise). Like Hölderlin, Brecht reworked the complex choral odes in order to make them easier to grasp and understand, so that "with little studying, they give out even more beauties" ("Diese Chöre … können bei einmaligem Anhören kaum voll verstanden werden").[644] In fact, he maintained that the original choruses often "sound like riddles asking to be solved" ("klingen wie Rätsel, die Lösungen verlangen")[645] and, in a letter to his brother, Brecht spoke of the "ultra-sophisticated choruses" (*die höchst artistischen Chöre*).[646] Thus, Brecht "corrected"

[643] Revermann (2013), 168.
[644] Brecht (2003a), 216. Brecht (1988), 215.
[645] Brecht (2003a), 216. Brecht (1988), 215.
[646] Brecht (2003a), 200-1. Brecht (1988), 19.

the Sophoclean choruses and even added a new mythical example amongst the ones offered by the Chorus in the second *stasimon*: the fate of the (p. 37) "sons of Lachmeus".[647] They suffered great pain and even abandoned their women, but they arose and slaughtered their tormentors when Pelias struck them. The myth, unknown in Greek mythology, is combined with the well-known myth of the hero Pelias, whom Brecht gave a new role. By inserting a new mythological *exemplum*, Brecht commented metatheatrically on the difficulties of the mythical allusions of the original and attempted to emulate his ancient model. This Brechtian addition is a distinctive trait of his version which contributes to amplify the original and increase the strangeness of the text.

Upon their first entrance on the stage, the Chorus proclaim the (only illusory) victory over Argos. Their movements and positions are carefully calculated. They place victory wreaths over their foreheads and excitedly praise the booty gained from the defeat of Argos (p. 12): "But victory big in booty has come / And favoured the numerous chariots of Thebes"; (p. 19): "Der großbeutige Sieg ist aber gekommen / Der Wagenreichen günstig, der Thebe". By contrast with Hölderlin's Chorus, who invoke the "big name of victory" (*der großnamige Sieg*),[648] Brecht's Chorus hail the "victory big in booty" (*der großbeutige Sieg*), thus emphasising their interest in material gains and economic profit.

As in the original, the Chorus invoke Bacchus, encourage the Thebans to indulge in forgetfulness (λησμοσύναν), and celebrate the victory (μεγαλώνυμος Νίκα) of Thebes "full of chariots" (πολυαρμάτῳ). Yet in Brecht's adaptation, the drunken festivities occur too early. The victorious procession set in motion by Creon is tactically orchestrated in order to distract the people from the plights caused by the war. With demagogic undertones – that reflect the Führer's slogans – the king exhorts the member of the Chorus to make clear to everyone that the *Blutverlust* does not exceed the usual and to forget about the war:[649]

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[647] On Brecht's previous experiments in "correcting ancient myths", see Vöhler (2013).
[648] Hölderlin (2001), 75.
[649] According to Fornaro (2012), 40, this choral song also echoes the irrational celebrations of the German youths that, in the final years of the war, still fanatically believed in Hitler and in the imminent victory too readily and uncritically.

(p. 19): Und nach dem Kriege hier
Macht die Vergessenheit aus!
In alle Göttertempel
Mit Chören die Nacht durch
Kommt her! Und, Thebe, die Bloße im Lorbeerschurz,
Erschütternd, herrsche der Bacchusreigen!

(p. 12) And after the war,
Now let there be a forgetting!
Into all the gods' temples
With choirs through the night
Come and let Thebes whose nakedness laurels have clothed
Be shaken with the stamp and dancing of Bacchus!

The "drink of oblivion" proffered by Bacchus allows the people, thirsting for peace, to rejoice in the illusory and premature celebrations and to forget about the numerous deaths weighing upon the city. Such a call for a forgetting is clearly manipulated by both the Elders and the king in order to camouflage the reality: the much praised victory is in fact a lie, because the war is not over. The king wants to distract the city, exhausted to the limits of its resources, from the terrible incident (the death of Polynices and Eteocles), so he transforms the Bacchus festival into a political and propagandistic instrument. Therefore, the people are aggrieved by Creon's authoritarian policy as much as by his calculated deception: the Theban king represents "a threat to the city's safety in a much more generalized and pervasive way than Sophocles' Creon is".[650]

Moreover, through his updating of the Chorus, Brecht speaks metatheatrically to his contemporary audience. He associates Dionysus and its irrational festivities with the feature of a "traditional" Aristotelian drama that sweeps the public along emotionally. Brecht shows his spectators the dangerous effects of the irrational and uncritical state of mind provoked by a Dionysiac drama, a "wrong kind" of tragedy

[650] Cairns (2017), 190.

and theatre that prevents the people from reasoning and understanding the workings of ideology. The people of Thebes, like the spectators of a Dionysiac drama, are unable to achieve critical distance and to understand that the festivities are an ideological construct ideated by the king and, similarly, that wars are only motivated by interests and greed of their rulers. In the same way, traditional theatre, by producing empathy and illusions in the spectators, prevents them from reasoning and thinking critically. Through this scene, Brecht is claiming the value and necessity of his own epic theatre as opposed to irrational, Dionysiac theatre, and he is warning his public – to let go and to indulge in a Dionysiac drama can only lead man to oblivion and stupidity.

Significantly, Bacchus is the main divinity invoked by the Elders in their choral songs. Brecht's use of the Bacchus motif emphasises the manipulative power of celebration and wine which allows the people to forget and produces a permanent state of "bacchic" excitement in the *polis*. The "god of joy" is also invoked in Brecht's rewriting of the third *stasimon* (781-800), radicalised and reinterpreted in Brecht's version. In the original, the Chorus celebrate the irresistible power of *eros*, which drags men to ruin (791-95). In Brecht, both the romantic love between Haemon and Antigone and the *philia* between blood-relatives play a marginal role. Instead, the intoxicated Elders invoke the power of Eros/Bacchus, referred to as "spirit of lust of the flesh" (*Geist der Lüste im Fleisch*), rather than "spirit of love" (*Geist der Liebe*) as in Hölderlin.[651] He is presented as the god of carnal love, wine, drunkenness and oblivion rather than a peaceful god of joy:[652]

> (pp. 43-4) Die Alten holen sich Bacchusstäbe
> Geist der Lüste im Fleisch, dennoch
> Sieger immer im Streit! Die blutsverwandt selbst
> Wirft er untereinander, der mächtig Bittende.
>
> (p. 33) The Elders fetch themselves Bacchic staves.

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[651] On a comparison between Hölderlin's and Brecht's third *stasimon*, see Philipsen (1998), 55-6; Nägele (1997), 98.

[652] This understanding of Bacchus as an orgiastic god corresponds to Nietzsche's image of Dionysus as the god of "savage natural instincts" and "extravagant sexual licentiousness", in contrast to the Apollonian, expressed in his *Birth of Tragedy*. As in Brecht, in Hölderlin, the call to Dionysus is also ecstatic and ceremonial, although the Greek god is referred to either as *Freudengott* or *Gesit der Liebe*.

Spirit of lust of the flesh but always
Winner in any quarrel. Even the tied by blood
He flings all awry, so strongly he pleads.

These festivities are arranged by Creon to coincide with tragic events. Thus he distracts the people from the funeral of Antigone and demonstrates anew his manipulative power over his subjects. Once more, in the choruses, the Dionysiac and irrational aspect emerges, resisting the epic process of rationalisation. Furthermore, rather than leaving space for anything transcendental or Christian, Brecht emphasises the bleakest and gloomiest aspects of the Greek god.[653]

8. Brecht's "Spectacular Failure"

By transforming Sophocles' *Antigone* into an "epic play", Brecht hoped to awaken the audience's critical perception of reality, thereby allowing them to view their own history from a certain distance and to uncover the workings of ideology. In order to achieve the desired effect, Brecht had to find modern correspondences to the ancient myth and, at the same time, he had to keep his audience at a critical distance by rejecting psychological involvement and an illusory style of presentation. The play as a whole allowed Brecht to draw parallels with modern historical conditions and to acknowledge both the king's self-interest and brutality and the people's complicity in his crimes. In particular, the first version of the prelude, with its direct reference to the recent past, suggested that Brecht believed that it was still possible to create an *Aktualitätspunkt.*[654]

In order to prevent empathy with the characters, Brecht not only chose a "remote story", but he also employed a number of techniques such as the *Rationalisierung* of the play and the *Verfremdungseffekt*, achieved through the display of acting techniques, the use of masks, and the archaic setting. The theory and theatrical choices behind Brecht's adaptation of *Antigone* are assembled in his *Modellbuch*, which provides a model for future applications of his own techniques and

[653] See Doering (2010-2011), 165.
[654] Brecht (1988), 48. Brecht (2003a), 204.

a foundation for any further performance of the play. Indeed, Brecht himself emphasised that his *Antigonemodell* is not conclusive, but rather an example of self-criticism, constantly changing and developing, and open to revision. Although his characters act in a certain way, he acknowledges that they could have acted in another way, as the actors were "free to invent variations on the model".[655] Brecht's method is not dogmatic but rather dynamic: like Hegel, Brecht emphasised the idea of "dialectic development". Only such a "dialectic" approach is appropriate to Brecht's view of his contemporary society.[656]

However, a drama whose purpose is to be continuously changing according to historical conditions must lose its effect as soon as the corresponding change is actually achieved; and if this is the main purpose of dramatic poetry, the poet must desire that his plays become obsolete as soon as possible. Because he perceived the insufficiency of his own model, Brecht claimed that his adaptation was not useful in the near future,[657] and left it open to future changes and re-evaluations. Such utopian longing for change is a distinctive trait of Brecht's *Antigone*, which attempts to provide the audience with a model of critical behaviour and thinking necessary to change society. His Marxist-inflected criticism and his aesthetic model remained nonetheless valid only at a speculative level, because Brecht failed to suggest how people could or should have resisted and coped with the events of the Nazi period. The "historical catastrophe" experienced by humanity after Auschwitz could not be accommodated easily:[658] neither the Athenian model of tragedy nor the epic avant-garde model was deemed sufficient. Brecht's attempts to unmask the ideology of the ruling class through his Marxist account proved futile or inadequate, as demonstrated by the fall of communism. As the play pessimistically suggests, people have not learned to think critically, man has proved his "inadequacy", wars still provoke meaningless deaths, and the revolution awaited by Marxism has not yet happened.

Because the play was rooted in the specific historical circumstances of the Nazi period and its aftermath, in 2008 Savage claimed that Brecht's *Antigone* "is as good

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[655] Brecht (1964), 211.
[656] Brecht (1964), 212.
[657] See Brecht (1988), 54; Brecht (2003a), 209.
[658] Taxidou (2007), 173.

as dead".[659] However, a decade later, it is legitimate to claim that Brecht's version targets issues of personal guilt, complicity, and economic profit behind wars which are strikingly relevant in our post-Trump, post-Brexit world. Brecht's emphasis on the dangers of accepting pre-established ideas too readily and his critique of violence, economic power, and wars are more compelling today than ever before.[660] Brecht created a political and sceptical theatre, which ultimately established *Antigone* as an exemplary play to portray civil disobedience against an autocratic government. His adaptation and his techniques have paved the way for later political reinterpretations of the *Antigone*: the contemporary interpretative model of *Antigone* would have been different without Brecht.

Therefore, Brecht's *Antigonemodell* remains a speculative enterprise that, precisely because of its speculative nature, was doomed to fail. And yet, it "fails spectacularly":[661] it challenges the impossibility for poetry and art to exist after the war. Marxism may have failed to cope with a post-war world and its teachings have proved inapplicable to a modern society, but humanism and art still survive after the Holocaust to provide man with a consolation. Precisely this failure ultimately opens new political ways of performing the classical past – ways which represent the essence of modern tragedy and have granted its survival. The fact that ancient tragedy still gives pleasure to modern people in a post-war world and is a vehicle for political critique proves the timelessness and topicality of *Antigone*'s message.

3.4.2. Carl Orff's *Antigone* (1949)

Only a year after Brecht's 1948 adaptation, Carl Orff's operatic version of *Antigone* premiered in Salzburg, as part of the *Salzburger Festspiele*.[662] Like Brecht, Orff employed Hölderlin's translation as the libretto for his operatic setting of the play.

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[659] Savage (2008), 151. See also Flashar (2009), 187-88.
[660] As remarked by Cairns (2017), 198.
[661] Taxidou (2008), 259.
[662] On Orff's life and works, see Liess (1966); Thomas (1985); Fassone (2001). See also the Orff Zentrum München website (http://www.orff-zentrum.de/) for a complete overview of Orff's biography, archives, and documents. Accessed on 1 July 2018. Orff collaborated with Schuh (director) and Fricsay (conductor) in the production of his *Antigone*. On this version, see Steiner (1984), 169-70, 215; Pöggeler (2004), 11; 13; 79; 112-13; 175-79; Flashar (2009), 188-93; Attfield (2010).

However, by contrast with Brecht, Orff did not emphasise the play's anti-authoritarian potential but rather its ritualist, sacral, and primitivist aspects. Significantly, Orff's *Antigone* was economically supported by the Nazis.[663] In his *Dokumentation VII: Musiktheater*,[664] Orff attested that he made his first musical sketches for *Antigone* in 1941, while the Nazi regime was at its peak. Although Orff never became a member of the Nazi party nor did he alter his compositional style in response to Nazi dictates, he opportunistically enjoyed the favours of the regime.[665] His works, such as his *Carmina Burana*, which celebrates German past, tradition, and purity, appealed to the aesthetic dictates of the Third Reich. The Nazi neoromantic and neoclassic aesthetic is also explicit in Orff's *Catulli Carmina*, composed between 1940 and 1943 and based on a number of Latin poems by Catullus.[666] In *Antigonae*, too, Orff explored ritualistic, cultic, and apolitical elements suitable to the regime.

It is not possible to ascribe the lack of political engagement to the pressure of censorship: although begun under the Nazi regime, Orff's *Antigone* did not premiere until the end of the war. Orff's version is thus emblematic of the extent to which "depoliticising" *Antigone* (especially after Hasenclever's and Brecht's political versions) could have political implications and respond to the political and aesthetic requirements of Nazism – even after the end of the war.

Both *Antigonae* (1949) and *Oedipus der Tyrann* (1957) are representative of Orff's shift of interest from the German to the Classical tradition. In his *Antigonae*, Orff uncovered the archaic, symbolic, and magical "core" of the original, which responded to the author's conception of primitive and ritualistic cult-theatre, highly spiritual and apolitical. This archaic dimension was conveyed through the austere music, reduced to its greatest simplicity and minimum of musical elements – with a predilection for the "primitivist" percussion section and oriental instruments such as xylophones, African drums, and cymbals. The pure concentration of the text, consisting almost entirely of declamation, made the play lasting only three hours,

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[663] See Attfield (2010), 345.
[664] This work is part of his eight-volume *Carl Orff und sein Werk: Dokumentation*, published between 1972 and 1981.
[665] On the question of Orff as Nazi artist, see Kater (1999); Kowalke (2000); Jorg (2000).
[666] *Catulli Carmina*, together with *Carmina Burana* and *Trionfo di Afrodite*, are part of Orff's *Trionfi*; on Orff's *Trionfi* and their relationship to Nazism, see Taruskin (2009), 161-67.

without interruption.[667] The simplification of the musical structure responded to Orff's idea of "stylised theatre" and *Elementare Musik* ("Elementary Music") and has been criticised by Stravinsky, who labelled Orff's music as "neo-Neanderthal".[668]

Significantly, despite the different approaches adopted by Orff and Brecht, both employed Neher's setting and Hölderlin's translation. A performance of Hölderlin's *Antigone* in the Burgtheater in Vienna, in 1940, staged by Lothar Müthel, was the source of inspiration for Orff's own interpretation of the play.[669] Orff was attracted by the cultic and ritualistic dimension behind Hölderlin's conception of Greek tragedy, also evident in the staging. For Orff's *Antigonae*, Neher chose simple stages, columns, arches, and platforms, but also "odd obelisk-like shapes with sharp, aggressive points, and dark porticoes extending to infinity", which communicated a sense of unreal.[670]

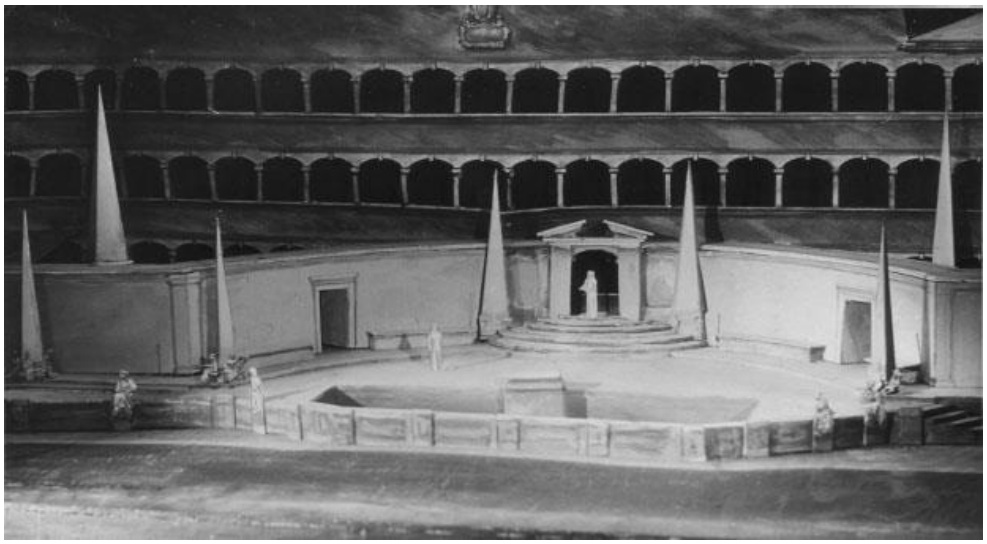

Fig. 12. Neher's model for the premiere of Orff's *Antigonae* at the Felsenreitschule, Salzburg, 1949. Attfield (2010), 359.

[667] Attfield (2010), 349.
[668] See Kowalke (2000), 78.
[669] See Flashar (2009), 189. See section 3.3. of this thesis.
[670] Attfield (2010), 360. See illustration 12.

Whereas both the premiere of Orff's *Antigonae* in 1949 and the 1950 revival in Dresden received much criticism,[671] the 1951 production in Munich was acclaimed by critics and by the philosopher Martin Heidegger, who thanked Orff for the "Wiedererweckung der antiken Tragödie".[672] Heidegger, like Orff, was favoured by the Nazis and his interpretation of the 'Ode to Man' was complicit in right-wing and fascist ideology.[673]

By contrast, in Brecht's view, Orff had failed to combine the original cultic and sacred elements with modernity, creating what he calls in his *Bemerkungen zu Orff's "Antigonae"*, "a deceptive, shallow, exotic, formalistic experiment preserving content that has gone bad".[674] Brecht criticised the lack of the "political" in Orff's version, neglected in favour of the "cultic" and "exotic" aspects. As Flashar acknowledges,[675] Orff and Brecht represent two antithetical variants of the reception history of *Antigone* in the twentieth century, Brecht representing the political and Orff the cultic-ritual, archaic, and apolitical tendency. Significantly, both interpretative trends of reception have Hölderlin's *Antigone* as their departing point.

Orff's influential opera continued to be successful in in the 1950s-60s. It was staged in Stuttgart in 1956, in Athens and in Mulheim in 1967, followed by other performances in Munich (1975) and Salzburg (1989). Moreover, influences of Orff's ritualist approach can be detected in Gustav Rudolf Sellner's apolitical and ritualistic staging of Greek tragedies (such as *Oedipus the King*) in the 1950s.[676]

Therefore, although it excludes the political, Orff's version testifies to the appeal of the *Antigone* in this period, as well as its malleability and openness to different interpretations – not only the political, but also the ritualistic and apolitical. Orff's opera represents the last "resistance point" before the interpretative model of *Antigone* as the epitome of political resistance became established. In Germany, this model was not the product of the immediate post-war years, but it prevailed from the

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[671] See critiques by Walther Ulbricht and Karl Laux in Flashar (2009), 190.
[672] Flashar (2009), 191. On the 1951 revival see Parson (2010).
[673] Se section 3.3.1. of this thesis.
[674] Brecht translated in Kowalke (2000), 59. See also Pöggeler (2004), 179; Flashar (2009), 188; Attfield (2010), 362.
[675] Flashar (2009), 188; 193. See also Fornaro (2012), 24.
[676] See Fischer-Lichte (2017), 203-20. A similar orientalising and ritualist approach characterises Pier Paolo Pasolini's films of Greek tragedies, such as *Oedipus Rex* (1967) and *Medea* (1970). See Berti and Morillo (2008), 89-115; MacKinnon (2016), 490-91.

1960s, as it is evident from Hochhuth's political interpretation of the play in his *Die Berliner Antigone*.

3.4.3. Rolf Hochhuth's *Die Berliner Antigone* (1963)

Die Berliner Antigone, a novella written by Rolf Hochhuth,[677] is another example of the post-war political reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*, adapted to the context of Berlin during the Nazi period. As the title reveals, it is the story of a "German" Antigone and it is freely inspired by a true story. Hochhuth developed the dilemma explored by Brecht in the first prologue of his *Antigone* and re-politicised the ancient story.[678] Whereas in Brecht only the prologue is set in Berlin 1945, in Hochhuth the entire story unfolds in a prison in Berlin, in the closing hours of the war. Hochhuth deliberately changed the names and roles of the characters, introduced historical references and details, and explicitly portrayed recent German history. Although Hasenclever's, Anouilh's, and Brecht's versions also allude to contemporary situations and leaders, Hochhuth's version explicitly denounces the Nazi regime as well as the oblivion of its atrocities.[679]

Although the process of assimilation and historical awareness of the horrors of the Second World War still had a long way to go in 1963, Hochhuth benefited from more critical and historical distance than Brecht would have in the immediate years following the fall of the Third Reich. *Die Berliner Antigone* becomes a vehicle for historical memory and a warning to remember the sacrifice of this, as well as other innumerable "Antigones". Hochhuth's adaptation thus exemplifies the politicisation undertaken by *Antigone* in the second half of the century, once the "Brechtian" model of *Antigone* as political play of dissent and resistance prevailed. Hochhuth transformed Sophocles' play into a vehicle to evaluate critically the Nazi oppression and to invoke a reaction against it. By contrast, more recent adaptations of *Antigone* do not deal any

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[677] On Hochhuth's life and works see Stone (1964); Taëni (1977); Ward (1977). *Die Berliner Antigone* has been translated into Italian by Fornaro (2008). Both Fornaro (2012), 115-20, and Juchler (2018), 29-31, offer a brief but detailed discussion of Hochhuth's version.
[678] This prologue was eliminated in the second production of the play in Greiz (1951).
[679] See Innes (1972), 176; Taëni (1977), 22; Huyssen (1980), on the spread and impact of works dealing with the Holocaust and the Third Reich in post-war Germany.

longer with the horrors of the Third Reich and open broader reflections on international politics.[680]

Hochhuth's novella was written in 1961 and published in different episodes in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1963.[681] In 1968, it became subject of a screen production by Ranier Wolffhardt. Perhaps because it expresses its didactic aims in clear and unequivocal terms, is rooted in the historical context of the Nazi period, and does not have the open texture of the original and its ability to transcend the local and parochial, Hochhuth's adaptation was not particularly successful. However, it is an important example of *Antigone*'s politicisation which explores issues of memory, collective responsibility, and individual guilt directly relevant to post-war Germany. In this chapter, I shall analyse the text of Hochhuth's version and its political aspects, investigating the divergences from the original and the influence of previous models such as Anouilh and Brecht. I shall thus show that Hochhuth's novella has an important place in the political reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* and demonstrates that "our" modern *Antigone* is an *Antigone* of political resistance.

1. Hochhuth's *Antigone*: between Reality and Fiction

Hochhuth is a well-known writer because of his politically charged works, based on the recent history and horrors of the war, which attempted to convey a provocative and didactic message.[682] Although he focused on themes of contemporary importance and gave precise, documented information, Hochhuth refused the label of "documentary" for his works and expressed the need for a certain artistic license without the truth being distorted.[683] *Die Berliner Antigone,* too, is a work of art rather than a strict documentary play. It portrays accurately contemporary historical events, but it is freely

[680] As I shall show in section 3.5. of this thesis.
[681] In the 1960s there was an explosion of works that re-adapted classical literature in order to denounce the Holocaust and all the crimes and violence of the Nazi-regime. See Lauriola (2016), 159-161.
[682] An example is Hochhuth's controversial first play, *Der Stellvertreter*, which portrayed the failure of Pope Pius XII to intercede on behalf of German Jews who met mass extermination during the Third Reich.
[683] Hochhuth considered history as the ultimate source of truth and himself as the "servant of history" (*Knecht der Geschichte*), but he also maintained that the readership "would assimilate historical truth more readily in the form of a semi-fiction" than in the form of a purely documentary material and emotionless report. See Hamburger (1986), 117; interview in Hochhuth (1981).

readapted according to the author's artistic intentions. In this combination of history, fiction, and classical literature, lies the originality of Hochhuth's distinctive "variant" of the Antigone story.

Drawing on the tradition of the "documentary drama", initiated by Erwin Piscator,[684] Hochhuth refashioned the Antigone story in his semi-fictional novella *Die Berliner Antigone*, in which the documented material is combined with poetic and artistic elaboration. The plot is taken from something that actually happened during the war in 1943: the execution of Rose Schlösinger (1907-1943) at the Plötzensee prison.[685] Rose was the mother of Marianne Heinemann, the first wife of Hochhuth, to whom the novella is dedicated.[686] By commemorating her story, Hochhuth denounced the abuses of women during imprisonment in the Nazi period and emphasised the active role of women in German resistance movements against the Nazis such as Mildred Harnak and Libertas Schulze-Boysen, wives of the founder leaders of the *Rote Kapelle*, who were executed together with their husbands.

[684] Erwin Piscator staged Hochhuth's *Der Stellvertreter* and directed Paul Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* (1965) and Heinar Kipphardt's *Oppenheimer* (1964). Fusing film into dramatic action and introducing mass-media (such as photographic records, quoted speeches, and projected texts) to the theatre were his decisive innovations, moved by his search of more appropriate methods of portraying reality and elaborate accounts discredited by undeniable, unpalatable documentation. See Subiotto (1972); Weiss (2003); Irmer (2006); Fischer-Lichte (2017), 121-24.

[685] The Plötzensee prison was built between 1868 and 1879 in the outskirts of Berlin. Here 2891 people were sentenced to death. It was transformed into a memorial in 1952. See Oleschinski [2002] 2009; Fornaro (2008), 29-30. See illustration 13.

[686] See Fornaro (2008), 29.

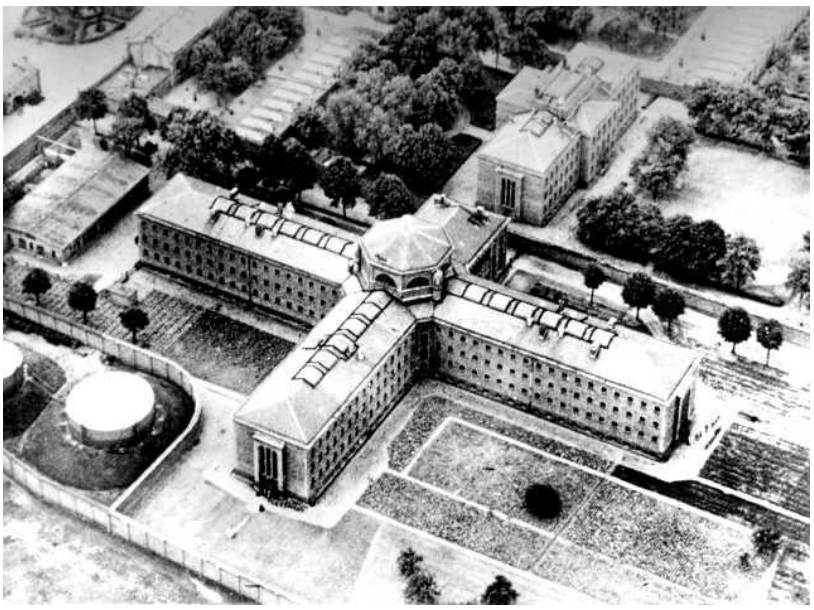

Fig. 13. Aerial view of the Plötzensee prison in the late 1920s. It served for pre-trial confinement of persons arraigned on political charges; the condemned prisoners were brought, immediately before their sentence, to House III, visible in the centre, and then to the execution shed (left) where they were murdered: https://www.gedenkstaette-ploetzensee.de/01_e.html

In order to create an accurate historical setting, Hochhuth inserted several historical references into his novella, including this epitaph (p. 18):

> EPITAPH
> Die Berliner Anatomie
> erhielt in den Jahren 1939-1945
> die Körper
> Von 269 hingerichteten Frauen.
>
> EPITAPH
> The Institute of Anatomy of Berlin
> Received between 1939 and 1945
> The bodies

Of 269 executed women.[687]

The epitaph, placed at the end of the novella, commemorates the victims of atrocities in the years 1939 to 1945, found in Berlin's Institute of Anatomy, a dissection laboratory to which the bodies of executed women were transferred during the Nazi period.[688] Rose, too, was executed because of her activities of espionage on behalf of the anti-Nazi movement labelled by the Gestapo as *Die Rote Kapelle* ("the Red Orchestra").[689] She was arrested in September 1942, condemned to death in February 1943 under the accusation of espionage, and guillotined on 5 August 1943, together with other fifteen people, twelve of which were women.

Other historical references set the context of the story from the very beginning. For example, Hochhuth refers to Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität (now the Humboldt-Universität) and to the Hitlerjungen's activities after the bombing.[690] Furthermore, he mentions the students' rebellion in Munich promoted by Hans Scholl and his sister Sophie, executed on 22 February 1943 (p. 6).[691] He names the Italian fascist leader Mussolini and his counsellor Ciano (pp. 14-5), as well as General Witzleben, the leading conspirator of the plot against Hitler on 20 July 1944 (p. 24). Sometimes Hochhuth explicitly reveals his technique: for example, he reveals his source of information (p. 18, *das Register*). He says that Witzleben's execution was filmed and the priest, one of the character of his novella, was interrogated years after the events – thus proving the historical reliability of his narration. Moreover, in portraying the thoughts and fears of the protagonist, Hochhuth takes inspiration from the letters and

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[687] Page numbers refer to Kreuzer's 1986 edition. English translations are mine.

[688] See Fornaro (2008), 30. At the time, professors and students were allowed to experiment and perform autopsies on the bodies of the executed. The director of the Institute of Anatomy was the gynaecologist Herman Stieve, who published the results gathered from this *Werkstoff* after the end of the war and was a much valued member of numerous scientific academies. Today, the Institute of Anatomy is a University centre for anatomy at the Charité, Berlin.

[689] "Red" because its members were communists based in Russia; "orchestra", because composed of radio telegraphs (referred to as "pianists" in Nazi jargon). The "Red orchestra" was a communist group which had been built up as a Soviet wartime intelligence service under Harro Schulze-Boysen, a Lieutenant in the Ministry of Aviation (executed in December 1942), and Arvid Harnack, a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Economics.

[690] Hochhuth himself became a member of the *Deutsches Jungvolk*, a Hitler youth organisation, in 1941, at the age of ten. See Stone (1964), 45-6, interview with Hochhuth.

[691] The White Rose and its leaders Hans and Sophie Scholl are immortalised as resistance fighters. See Pattoni (2013) on recent film productions which associate Antigone with Sophie Scholl, such as Marc Rothemund's *Sophie Scholl: Die letzten Tage* (2005), and Michael Sommer's drama *Antigone/Sophie*, produced in 2013 at the Ulm Theatre.

notes that the "real" Rose was able to send to her mother clandestinely during her imprisonment.[692]

Therefore, Hochhuth presents controversial historical events based on a reliable and accurate historical account in a direct, almost bureaucratic style, which recalls the language of the Third Reich.[693] Although the facts speak for themselves, the author casually scatters within the narrative some provocative comments which indirectly reveal his programmatic political criticism. For example, the historical context of the novella is described as "a period of massacre" (p. 5: *Zeiten des Massensterbens*) and a "time of total war" (p. 9: *Zeitpunkt des totalen Krieges*).[694] Although this might seem a statement of the obvious in 1960s Berlin, Hochhuth polemically shows that what was considered "obvious" in the Nazi period (massacre, mass burials, and the death of an innocent girl) is actually something inconceivable. Therefore, Hochhuth's "historical" novel, written several years after the events described, offers a framework for thinking about the Nazi period and interacts with this framework, providing opportunities for dramatic irony guided by the intervening author. Hochhuth does not describe Hitler's downfall nor the condemnation of the Nazis because the reader already knows what will happen – whereas Hochhuth's heroine, named Anne, is unaware that the war will end in two years. Hochhuth simply documents that Anne died two years before the end of the war and one year before the death of Witzleben, at the hands of the same executioner (p. 18).

2. Divergences from Reality and from the Original

Shortly before *Antigone*, Hochhuth wrote another story entitled *Resignation oder die Geschichte einer Ehe* (1959). In both stories the protagonists are women, and great emphasis is placed on individual responsibility. Antigone partly resembles Hochhuth's previous characters and central figures, such as Riccardo and Lysistrata, individuals typically challenged in an extreme situation and isolated in their struggle.[695]

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[692] See Fornaro (2012), 117.
[693] The so called *Lingua Tertii Imperii*; see Fornaro (2012), 115.
[694] The concept of "total war" was introduced by the minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels in the Berliner Sportpalast on 20 July 1944.
[695] Riccardo is the protagonist of *Der Stellvertreter* (1963); *Lysistrate und die Nato* was published in 1973.

Hochhuth's *Antigone* is nonetheless his only work inspired by a Classical myth. It is not surprising that Hochhuth chose to adapt Sophocles' *Antigone*, whose story had been repeatedly appropriated in the German tradition since Hölderlin and Hegel and had been politicised by Brecht fifteen years earlier.

In Hochhuth's novella, Anne is a young woman who challenges the despotism of the state and is tried by a military court in Berlin under the accusation of "false testimony" (p. 5):

> Anne behauptete, ihren Bruder … sofort nach dem Fliegerangriff ohne fremde Hilfe aus der Anatomie herausgeholt und auf den Invalidenfriedhof gebracht zu haben.
>
> Anne had declared to have taken her brother's corpse ... from the Institute of anatomy to the Cemetery of the Invalids immediately after the air raid, without any help.[696]

Anne is accused of having buried illegally her brother, killed as a traitor because of his subversive activities at the front. Anne's brother, who remains unnamed, was an officer of the sixth army, which had been almost entirely annihilated at the Russian front. After the battle of Stalingrad, he declared that the Germans had been defeated because of Hitler and his military inefficiency, not because of the Russians. For this reason, he was accused of betrayal and executed. Thus, Hochhuth adapts the Sophoclean theme of the "fratricidal war" to the context of Nazi Germany, in which "brothers" and members of the same army summarily were killed and deprived of a proper funeral. Both Polynices and Anne's brother are considered opponents to the state. However, in Hochhuth's story, Anne's brother is hanged by the Reich because of his rebellion against the despotism of the state. The theme of the "fratricidal conflict" between members of the same army also recalls Brecht's prologue in his *Antigone*.

In Hochhuth's novella, Anne does not reveal her deed to a sister – Ismene being absent in the modern version – but rather declares it in tribunal, in front of an

[696] The graveyard of the invalids was an historical graveyard reserved for Nazi soldiers, built in 1748 by Friedrich II near a house for invalid soldiers.

assembled court. Since she has buried a "traitor", Anne is to be executed. The situation described by Hochhuth recalls the ancient tragedy also because the son of the judge presiding Anne's trial, Bodo (explicitly named after Rose's husband, Bodo Schlösinger), is engaged to Anne, exactly as Creon is the father of Haemon in Sophocles' *Antigone* – whereas this was not the case in the "real" story of Rose.

The judge presiding over Anne's trial represents the more humanised and sympathetic side of Creon; by contrast, his despotic and tyrannical attitude can be associated with Hitler, evoked throughout Hochhuth's novella. Whereas in the original Creon's policy progressively turns into tyranny, Hitler's regime already has degenerated into despotism. The denial to grant burial to opponents of the state is not a "law of particularity" which applies to a single individual, as it was the case in Sophocles;[697] rather, the public execution of Anne serves as an example to dissuade others from opposing authority and is only one example of the victims of the Reich's violence. By sacrificing herself in the name of her brother, Anne physically replaces his body with her own.[698]

Even more than Antigone, Anne is alone in her defiance and has no support from a sister, the people, the gods, or her fiancé. The Chorus, absent in Hochhuth's novella, is replaced by a number of minor characters who interact with the heroine, as well as by the dead (omnipresent but silent), and the anonymous crowd of people – those who denounced Anne and those who assist in the trial and the execution without intervening. The priest, who can be partly associated with Tiresias, has a minor advisory role and unsuccessfully attempts to comfort Anne; rather than helping her, he annihilates her hopes and strength. Hochhuth's heroine does not believe in God and there is no religious motivation behind her act, the burial of her brother.

Whereas in Sophocles' *Antigone* Haemon speaks directly to his father and tries – albeit unsuccessfully – to convince him to change his mind, in Hochhuth's novella Bodo is away fighting at the front. Rose's husband, too, was sent to the Russian front in 1940. From the front he supplied military information by radio for the *Rote Kapelle* until this secret service was uncovered in 1942. He killed himself in Russia in 1943, after writing a letter in which he attempted to take full responsibility for the accusations

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[697] See section 1.4.2. of this thesis.
[698] See Steiner (1984), 143: "her [Anne's] own body is to take the useful place of her brother's".

made against Rose.[699] However, the letter was never sent nor received. Hochhuth changes slightly the sequence of events: in his novella Anne sends a farewell letter to her fiancé – a motif which recalls Anouilh's *Antigone*.[700] Bodo, believing Anne had been executed, commits suicide (whereas in the original Haemon dies only after Antigone's death). This episode increases Anne's remorse and leads her to desire death over life.

The powerful divergences from the original reveal that Hochhuth is operating on a double level: on the one hand, he unveils contemporary issues, on the other, he reworks the Sophoclean myth, separated by more than a thousand years from his own time. In what follows, I shall show the extent to which the author has assimilated the political tradition of the play and reshaped its motifs and themes in distinctive ways in order to express his political critique, specifically directed against the Nazi regime.

a. An(tigo)ne

The protagonist of Hochhuth's novella is, in many ways, similar to Sophocles' Antigone. The name "Anne" itself recalls the name of "An(tigo)ne".[701] The judge presiding the trial refers to Anne as a "criminal" (p. 7: *die Delinquentin*) and "obstinate girl" (*Frauenzimmer*); this characterisation recalls the Sophoclean Chorus' comment that she is bold (853-56; 875). In Hochhuth, Anne-Antigone becomes the symbol of the resistance of the individual against a tyrannical order – already iconic through Anouilh's and Brecht's versions. However, at the beginning of Hochhuth's novella, Anne appears very different from Sophocles' Antigone. She is a scared, young woman who even finds it hard to believe that she performed the burial (p. 9): "The court does not believe you, that you have taken the brother to the Cemetery of the Invalids ... – I would not believe it either" ("Das Gericht glaubt Ihnen nicht, daß Sie den Bruder auf den Invalidenfriedhof geschafft haben … – ich würde das auch nicht glauben"). Whereas Sophocles' Antigone knows well the consequences of her act and never

[699] See Fornaro (2012), 118.
[700] The practice of sending letters through military post reflects an historically attested and usual practice in times of war. On Anouilh's *Antigone*, see section 3.3.2. of this thesis.
[701] See comments on this contraction in Kytzler (1993), 101; Brennecke (1976), 322; Montagne (1997), 85.

questions its rightness (apart from her doubt in the last *kommos*), Anne faints in front of the judge's sentence because she had not realised that removing the body of her brother from the Institute of Anatomy could cause her execution (p. 9: "obwohl sie nicht mit der Todesstrafe gerechnet hätte"; "although she had not expected the death penalty"). She commits a judgemental error (*hamartia*) and finds herself involved, unwillingly, in a bigger mechanism which goes beyond her control. Thus, Anne's act is not premeditated; initially, she is unaware of the political consequences of her deed, simply moved by her instinct and the desire to be loyal to her brother. Only as she realises that she will die because of the burial and accepts her death, does Anne's deed become a political act of resistance against the law of the Third Reich.

Therefore, Anne is not a classical and idealised heroine but rather a conflicted and contradictory figure. She lacks the "heroic temper" of Greek tragic heroes.[702] She is afraid of death, she vomits at the sight of her brother in the anatomy theatre, and she avoids looking at his tortured features during the burial. The emphasis on the more "humane" and "realistic" traits of Antigone is common in modern versions. In Anouilh, Antigone is presented as a young hysterical adolescent who, unlike Sophocles' Antigone, is not brave by nature. In Brecht, too, Antigone is less heroic: she is presented as an upper class woman who guards her own interests before the interests of the community. Like Anouilh's and Brecht's heroines, Hochhuth's Anne is hesitant and insecure. She is an ordinary woman, representative of the common people, the "normal folk 'like you and me', who in those days collaborated and took upon themselves a measure of guilt".[703] Through such a "humanisation" of the heroine, Hochhuth provokes the empathy and compassion of the readers, as well as a sense of indignation in front of the "inhuman" Nazi system that caused the tragic death of this woman. Anne is an anonymous – rather than heroic – woman, who is nonetheless forced to such a heroic sacrifice in order to fight for justice and human dignity. By associating Anne's act with Antigone's, Hochhuth valorises her uncompromising spirit which equates her with the Greek heroine.

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[702] On the heroic temper of Antigone and Creon in the original, see Knox (1964), 62-90. It can be argued that Sophocles' Antigone views herself heroically; see Franklin and Harrison (2003), 38.
[703] Taëni (1977), 52.

After the judge's proclamation, Anne sits in court "shocked and quiet" (p. 6: *zermürbt und leise*). She does not deny her act but she also does not proclaim it openly and defiantly as Sophocles' Antigone (86-7; 443), nor does she provoke the judge with daring and provocative assertions as Antigone does with Creon at lines 458-70, 497-500, 559-60. The readers do not hear her voice, but rather her inner thoughts and fears. Her resistance, though open and extreme, is rather passive: she simply refuses to accept the judge's offers of help but she does nothing to accelerate her death nor does she consider death a *kerdos*, a gain (461-62).

Hochhuth's heroine does indeed show the same obsession with death as Sophocles' Antigone. She meditates on the many people that have already died without even knowing why and thinks that at least she will know the reason for her death, which is, in any case, something inevitable (p. 12: "daß so viele schon drüben sind, daß alle nach drüben kommen, das muß mir, das muß mir genügen"). Sophocles' Antigone, too, is aware that her death is unavoidable and asks Creon what he wants more than her death (θέλεις τι μεῖζον ἢ κατακτεῖναί μ᾽ ἑλών; 497). In Hochhuth, the fear of death never leaves Anne (p. 9: "die Todesangst gab sie nun nicht mehr frei") and she repeatedly pre-figures in her imagination every detail of her execution. She remembers that, in order to console her for her brother's hanging, Bodo had told her that hanging is a less painful way of dying and provides a quicker death than the guillotine. Sarcastically, she realises now that death by guillotine is reserved for women. What was meant to be a consolation for her now becomes a terrible truth which increases the protagonist's fear (pp. 13-4).

In particular, in the middle of the novella, Anne experiences a moment of crisis: after a fellow prisoner, a Polish girl accused of being a *Plünderer,*[704] is led out to execution, she suddenly regrets her decision. Confronted with the death of her friend (who had become almost a sister, a sort of "Ismene" figure), Anne fully realises the consequences of her act and rejects her previous decision. She no longer understands the girl who had buried her brother, and she would like to step back from her decision (p. 13: "[sie] begriff das Mädchen nicht mehr, das seinen Bruder bestattet hatte – wollte

[704] The 19-year-old girl had secretly eaten in a bakery in Dresden during an air raid and had thus been accused of looting. The General hoped that sharing the cell with a *rettungslos Verlorene* would make Anne pliable to his intention. However, according to the narrator, her presence reassured Anne and the two women became friends. This episode also is inspired by reality; see Fornaro (2012), 118.

es nicht mehr sein, wollte zurücknehmen. Damit war sie vernichtet."). The state is therefore successful in intimidating her, but the decision to live comes too late.
This moment of weakness can be compared to Antigone's final *kommos* in Sophocles. Antigone, too, feels abandoned by the people and the gods and cannot understand her punishment. The Greek heroine regrets to die "without marriage" (816) and laments the impossibility of having children. And yet, she has no doubt that justice will prevail (876-80), she knows exactly why she dies, and strongly believes in the non-written laws of the gods. The motif of marriage is absent in Hochhuth's version, although great space is given to the romantic love that ties Bodo and Anne: her love for him is what makes it more difficult for Anne to renounce life.

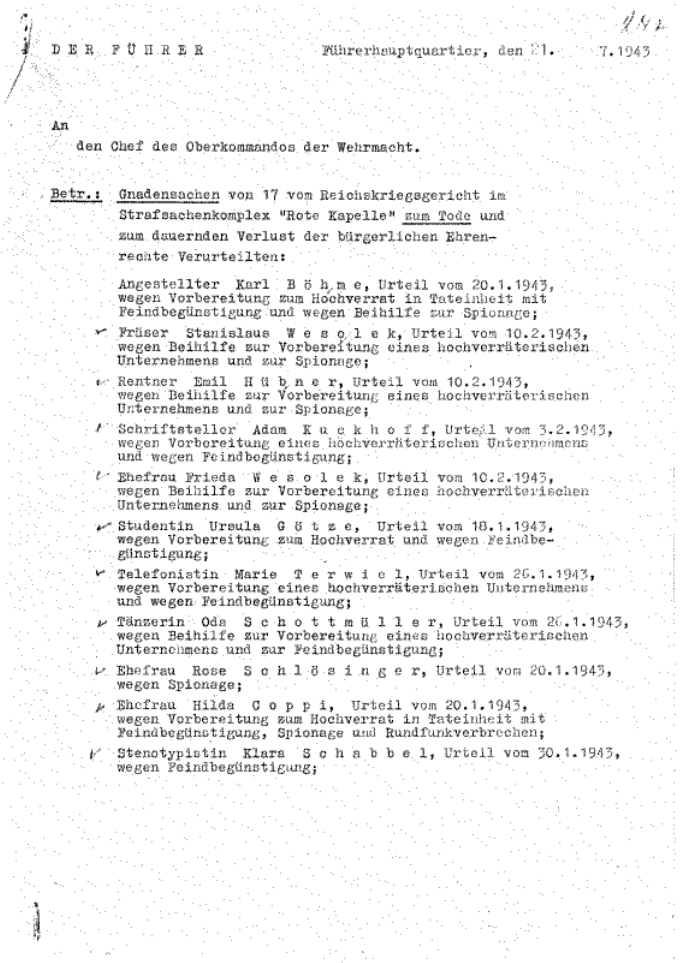
Antigone's final doubts and regret in the original are expanded in the modern version. Anne does not understand the significance of her sacrifice to the extent that, in writing the last letter to her fiancé Bodo, she struggles to give a meaning to her death. Although the motif of the farewell letter recalls Anouilh's *Antigone*,[705] it has a completely different function in Hochhuth. In writing the letter, neither heroine understands what she is dying for and both prefer to hide their fear. Anouilh's Antigone is so uncertain in her commitment that she resolves simply to ask Haemon's forgiveness in her letter. Anne would like to explain why she is dying but she cannot find a satisfactory answer; like Anouilh's Antigone, she does not even remember why she has buried her brother. Therefore, she resolves to display tranquillity and courage and writes a romantic letter to Bodo (pp. 11-2).[706] Whereas in Anouilh this scene is macabre and grotesque, in Hochhuth it is extremely tragic: because of this letter, Bodo commits suicide, believing that Anne has already been executed.

By contrast, Anne lacks the courage to commit suicide. A pane of glass shattered in an air raid through the cell window would allow her to put an end to her life, but she does not use it. After the procedure of *Filzung*, the body's inspection, the wardress discovers the glass shard in Anne's hair: she laughs, pleased by her own cunning, but after Anne starts crying, she tries to console her with an apple (p. 16). She is not cruel by nature, rather she shows empathy and concern for the prisoner. The

[705] See section 3.3.2. of this thesis.
[706] This letter and the heroine's thought in her cell are inspired by the *Kassiber*, the notes that Rose was able to deliver in secret to her mother. See Fornaro (2012), 117.

maternal character of the wardress, invented by Hochhuth, recalls Anouilh's Nurse: both the wardress and the nurse are maternal characters that serve to accentuate the insecurity and vulnerability of the heroine in the modern versions.

Before death, life appears to both Anne and Antigone as valuable, but Anne humbly submits a request for clemency,[707] whereas it is questionable whether Sophocles' Antigone would have done so, if she had been given the opportunity. The fact that Anne does not commit suicide and even sends a request for clemency shows her vulnerability and love for life, which render astonishing the idea that Anne will renounce life.



DER FÜHRER Führerhauptquartier, den 21. 7.1943

An
den Chef des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht.

Betr.: Gnadensachen von 17 vom Reichskriegsgericht im Strafsachenkomplex "Rote Kapelle" zum Tode und zum dauernden Verlust der bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte Verurteilten:

Angestellter Karl B ö h m e, Urteil vom 20.1.1943, wegen Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat in Tateinheit mit Feindbegünstigung und wegen Beihilfe zur Spionage;

Fräser Stanislaus W e s o l e k, Urteil vom 10.2.1943, wegen Beihilfe zur Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und zur Spionage;

Rentner Emil H ü b n e r, Urteil vom 10.2.1943, wegen Beihilfe zur Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und zur Spionage;

Schriftsteller Adam K u c k h o f f, Urteil vom 3.2.1943, wegen Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und wegen Feindbegünstigung;

Ehefrau Frieda W e s o l e k, Urteil vom 10.2.1943, wegen Beihilfe zur Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und zur Spionage;

Studentin Ursula G ö t z e, Urteil vom 18.1.1943, wegen Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat und wegen Feindbegünstigung;

Telefonistin Marie T e r w i e l, Urteil vom 26.1.1943, wegen Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und wegen Feindbegünstigung;

Tänzerin Oda S c h o t t m ü l l e r, Urteil vom 26.1.1943, wegen Beihilfe zur Vorbereitung eines hochverräterischen Unternehmens und zur Feindbegünstigung;

Ehefrau Rose S c h l ö s i n g e r, Urteil vom 20.1.1943, wegen Spionage;

Ehefrau Hilda C o p p i, Urteil vom 20.1.1943, wegen Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat in Tateinheit mit Feindbegünstigung, Spionage und Rundfunkverbrechen;

Stenotypistin Klara S c h a b b e l, Urteil vom 30.1.1943, wegen Feindbegünstigung;

Fig. 14. Refusal of appeal for clemency of 17 members of the Berlin Red Orchestra on 21 July 1943. The name of Rose appears in the third-last line. http://www.gedenkstaette-ploetzensee.de/zoom/09_6_dt.html

[707] As the "real" Rose did, see illustration 14.

The day light penetrating through the window of the cell reminds her that life continues. At night, as she lies down, the desire for life takes hold of her (p. 16: "in den Nächten, wenn sie lag, überwog ihre Daseinsbegierde").[708] Hochhuth narrates the fears and thoughts of the protagonist, her longing for life and freedom (pp. 9-10):

> Und wenigstens innerlich riß sie sich los von Wand und Gitter, heraus aus der Zelle – und sie war frei, solange sie draußen an den Streifen Erde dachte, an den heidnisch alten, schon seit Generationen stillgelegten Totenacker …
>
> And she fled away, at least inwardly, from the prison wall and bars, out of the cell – and she was free as long as she thought of the strip of earth outside, of the old pagan graveyard, silent for generations …

The poetic description adds a romantic note to the objective narration: Anne evokes the statuesque trees of Berlin and watches the stars through the bars of the cell (p. 12). Antigone, in her last *kommos*, speaks of her beloved Thebes, its springs and groves that she shall never see again; yet, rather than invoking them nostalgically, she calls upon them as witnesses to the injustice she is suffering (844-45). As Antigone evokes her mother and unhappy father (865), Anne recalls her beloved relatives and her mother, who committed suicide shortly after the execution of her brother (p. 10).

Therefore, Hochhuth's Antigone is forced to be a "heroine" in a context in which human rights are violated, but she lacks the strong ideological commitment of her Greek predecessor. Although she is reluctant to renounce life and shows a constant fear of death, Anne nonetheless dies, publicly executed by the regime because of her act, with a courage comparable to that of Antigone. Through her unjust death, Hochhuth demonstrates the fallibility and limits of human law and emphasises the necessity to be true to one's own moral sense and dignity in whatsoever historical condition. He also encourages his readers to remember those Resistance fighters who,

[708] The love for life and its simplest pleasures characterises Anouilh's Antigone too. In front of her sister Ismene, Anouilh's Antigone admits that she would prefer to live (p. 47).

like Anne, were murdered and quickly forgotten by German society in the immediate years following the end of the war.

b. The Role of Creon and the Tyranny of the State

In Hochhuth's novella two characters embody the two sides of Creon's personality as presented in Sophocles: ruler (Hitler) and father (the chief judge presiding over Anne's trial).[709] Whereas Hitler's attitude is presented as irrevocably inhuman, the chief justice shows some regrets and empathy towards the heroine's fate because she is engaged to his own son Bodo. Due to the coexistence of both of Creon's roles – father and ruler – in two different characters, there is no final "conversion" of Creon.

Although Hitler does not appear in the novella, his commands and tyrannical persona are evoked throughout the story. There is no grand opening speech as in Sophocles because the tyrannical principles of Hitler's rule are known to everybody: any act of opposition (such as the rebellion of Munich) had to be immediately silenced without too much noise or relevance that could have reached the foreign press. According to Hitler, Anne has to be executed, irrespective of her gender, age, or personal relation to the judge. The aim of both Creon's and Hitler's command in Hochhuth is to intimidate the people and prevent others from opposing the authority of the state. Anne's execution serves as an example for the students of medicine that had probably helped her in recovering the body (p. 7).

By contrast, the chief judge is tormented between his desire to be faithful to the Reich on the one hand, and to disobey to its commands for the sake of his son on the other. He naturally seeks to prevent Anne's death although he disapproves of such a union with what he calls a "sister of a traitor" (p. 6: "Schwester eines Hochverräters"). Therefore, he reluctantly conforms to the Führer's command (p. 7). In Sophocles, Creon's attempt to save Antigone comes too late, as the Chorus' leader remarks (1103-4). In Anouilh's, Brecht's, and Hochhuth's versions, as well as in other modern adaptations,[710] Antigone is given a chance to save herself. In Hochhuth, the

[709] By contrast, for example, with Brecht's version, in which Creon is addressed as *mein Führer* and can be easily identified with Hitler.
[710] Such as Brathwaite's *Odale's Choice* (1967) and Òsófisan's *Tegonni* (1994). See section 3.5.2. of this thesis.

second possibility offered by the judge shows that the tragedy is not doomed to happen nor pre-determined: the heroine could actually save herself, but she refuses such a way out and chooses to be faithful to her principles. Therefore, the modern version emphasises that the heroine is fully responsible for her act. Anne is a heroine who finds herself fully isolated in an extreme situation because of her own free choice. She chooses to perform the burial and die for what she thinks is right and does not correspond to the law of the Third Reich.

By playing on a lexical misunderstanding, the judge would in fact be able to save Anne. Hitler has ordered to "return the corpse" to the Anatomy institute (p. 7), which is interpreted by the judge in a literal way: Anne has to return the body rather than, as the Führer implicitly meant, return Anne's own body to the Anatomy institute.[711] In addition, the judge attempts to save the heroine through bureaucratic and practical means, playing on her fear and uncertainty. He immediately justifies Anne's behaviour with diverse "attenuating circumstances" (*mildernde Umstände*): the chaos of the bombing, the attachment to her brother, and her altered psychological state (since her mother killed herself after the execution of her son). Moreover, she would have not gained anything from performing the burial (p. 8), which is not to be intended as a conscious "political act" against the state.

The judge's indulgence is not activated by a spirit of rebellion or disobedience but rather by his personal relation with the prisoner and by his willingness to help Bodo. Therefore, although his patriotism and faithfulness to the regime are manifest, he does show a certain *philia* towards his family members and he does not exclusively privilege the interests of the state above the interests of his relatives, like Sophocles' Creon. However, he cannot postpone the verdict for much longer and gives Anne a brutal ultimatum: either she reveals, in the next twenty-four hours, where her brother's corpse is or she will be executed.[712] The judge does not withdraw his offer to Anne until the end, but her condemnation is ultimately inevitable because even the judge's influence over the course of action is limited (p. 15).

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[711] According to Steiner (1984), 143, Hochhuth's Antigone "not only inters Polynices at the cost of her own life: she literally substitutes her body for his. This is Hochhuth's intensification of the established motif of joint burial."

[712] This limit is extended to eleven days after the court-building is razed in an air-raid.

At the end, the judge's personal tragedy (the death of his son) makes him even more faithful to Hitler's cause. His devotion is praised as exemplary by Hitler who claimed that Mussolini should take example from the judge and kill his son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano, a traitor.[713] Although he is honoured with the highest grade (p. 15: "in heroischer Weise"), the judge, far from being the hero, is the victim of Hitler's brutal policy and his own complicity in his crimes. His attitude is exemplary of the people's pliability and obedience and is condemned by Hochhuth, who believes that, even though during the war freedom was limited, an alternative still existed. In his version, Hochhuth shows the extent to which people were permanently forced to place the law of the state before personal feelings and family, under the constant threat of the Nazi death-machinery.

c. The Reasons Behind Anne's Act: in Search for a Religious Motivation

Whereas in the original the burial is only performed after the encounter between Antigone and Ismene, in Hochhuth's novella the story begins as the burial already has been performed. The opposition between "illegal" and "official" burial is indeed a thoroughly Sophoclean theme. In addition to Sophocles, Hochhuth provides a detailed description of the official burial. With veiled irony, he explains that the Reich provided "ministers of both confessions" (*Geistliche beider Konfessionen*),[714] a "well-known party leader" (*namhafter Parteiredner*), and "the musicians of the military battalion" (p. 5: *Musikzug des Wachbataillons*). It was an important celebratory and commemorative event, which attempted through such pomposity to do justice to the sacrifice of these young men and to justify their death in front of their families. The author adds that the term *Massengrab* was forbidden in favour of the euphemism *Gemeinschaftsgrab*, "common graves" (p. 5: "die Reichsregierung pflegte die Toten eines Gemeinschaftsgrabes mit besonders tröstlichem Aufwand beizusetzen."), perhaps evoking the ancient idea of the honorific collective grave. By favouring the paradoxical euphemism *Gemeinschaftsgrab* over the banned term *Massengrab*, the

[713] In the historical time this event had already happened; although it is not documented nor historically proven that Mussolini commissioned the execution of Ciano, he was certainly behind it.
[714] It is noteworthy that Hochhuth mentions both confessions, Catholicism and Protestantism, both partaking in the regime's distortion of reality.

government evoked the notion of death as a solemn, almost social occasion, rather than an anonymous, ordinary "mass burial". However, it is clear that such a funeral did not give dignity nor honour to the fallen victims.[715] The absurdity of this command reflects the government's ideological distortion of reality and contrasts with the importance attributed to burial by Anne, who sacrifices her own life in order to give her brother a last resting place.

In Hochhuth's novella, Anne does not have a clear explanation for why she feels she should bury her brother – unlike Sophocles' Antigone. Whereas Antigone believes in the laws of the gods, Hochhuth does not suggest at any point that Anne's actions are motivated by a religious impulse, although his insecure and vulnerable heroine sometimes feels attracted to the comfortable solutions offered by Christian faith. In her extreme situation, she is still animated by hope (*elpis*) and fears that she could easily submit to the pastor's advice. However, if she would acquiesce in the pastor's promise that her brother will acquire eternal life even without burial, her sacrifice would be deprived of any meaning (p. 12: "Ohm versuchte Anne klarzumachen, daß ein Unbestatteter nach christlicher Auffassung nicht ruhelos bleibe").

Although both political and religious authorities are able to instil fear and uncertainty in her, Anne explicitly refuses to pray and to use a rosary made of bread crumbs by her Catholic Polish cellmate (p. 13). Confronted with Christianity of both confessions – the Catholicism of the Polish woman and the Protestantism of the pastor – she ultimately does not submit to either doctrine. Towards the end of the novella, she claims (p. 16):

> Allein der Tod uns beschützen kann. Der Tod, nicht Gott. Denn zu jung, um ergeben zu sein, trennte sie von *dem* wie eine Eiszeit die komische Gleichgültigkeit, mit der er seinem Geschöpf gegenüberstand, echolos wie die Zellenwand. Von ‚oben' erhoffte sie nichts als ihre schnelle Hinwegnahme durch eine Bombe.

[715] See Fornaro (2012), 116.

> Only death can protect us. Death, not God. Too young to be submissive, she was infinitely separated from God and the cosmic indifference towards his creature, a God without echo as the cell wall of her prison. From 'above' she hoped for nothing but to be quickly taken away by a bomb.

With this passage, Hochhuth distances himself from the Greek original. Whereas Sophocles' Antigone is animated by divine faith (she calls on Zeus, Dike, and Hades and believes that the unwritten laws of the gods are higher than any human law, 450-59), Anne condemns God's "cosmic indifference" and does not hope for a divine, external intervention. Notions of religious faith and ineluctable fate play no role in Hochhuth's version, instead being replaced by a disenchanted and rational view of life and death.

And yet, religion – whether pagan or Christian – is not the only motivation for burying a sibling and attributing importance to such an act. Like Antigone, Anne acts out of *philia* to her native family and loyalty to her conscience. Anne is determined to keep her brother's corpse safe from violations (*Schergen und Schändern*) and this awareness alone prevents her from regretting her deed (p. 9: "bewahrte sie davor zu bereuen"). She performs the burial because of an "unconscious, rather instinctive brotherly love" ("unbewußten, eher instinktiven Bruderliebe").[716] It is the thought of her beloved that gives some sense and hope to her own death, which only appears towards the end (p. 16) "conceivable without horror, yes, just as the true faithful freedom" ("als die wahre verläßiche Freiheit"). Therefore, Anne follows the "law" of her ethical conscience rather than the divine laws. If there is anything religious in her act, it is her belief in a kind of "secular religiosity" that acknowledges the "sacred" quality of ritual and the importance of burial, without being an orthodox Christian faith.

In Hochhuth, the burial is enacted more instinctively than in Sophocles' tragedy. The narrator reports extensively how Anne excavates the grave, not too deeply, because of her fear of being discovered, and how she is almost involuntarily dragged by the human flood, in the chaos following the bombings (p. 10: "ganz Berlin

[716] Brennecke (1976), 327.

eilte in chaotisch geschäftigen Löschzügen zu den Bränden"). It is the general chaos, as well as the bushes and buildings surrounding her, which allow Anne to perform the burial undisturbed. There is no mysterious storm that hides the heroine while performing the burial, a possible sign of the gods (278-79); rather, practical and contingent circumstances give her time to complete her task without interruption.

During her brother's burial, Anne reads a passage of the Latin Bible on another grave (p. 10): "oboedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus".[717] At first, because she does not know Latin, it is meaningless to her. She thus asks the pastor Ohm to translate it, in a desperate search for a foothold. Shortly before her execution Anne speaks with the pastor and the author wonders whether she could remember the words and their meaning (pp. 17-8: "ob Anne sich jetzt des Wortes Apost. 5, 29 erinnern konnte … wir wissen es nicht"), now translated into German. This line ("it is necessary to obey the gods and not man") explicitly recalls lines 450-55 of the original, as Antigone proclaims in front of Creon that the "unwritten, unbreakable laws of the gods" must be obeyed and have greater value than human laws. Perhaps this command has no real meaning for Anne and she recalls it before her death as a final, desperate consolation.

In Hochhuth's novella, Anne is ultimately a victim, powerless in front of the violence of the Nazi system. Her death is reduced to an act of defiance that, although brave and memorable, has no real power to change reality. Rather than by an ideological or explicitly political commitment, Anne's act is dictated by her instinctive fraternal love, by her morality and individual conscience, and by a genuine humanity. Fornaro suggests that Hochhuth, through his novella, expresses the idea that German Resistance was moved by spontaneous initiatives (such as the White Rose in Munich) which lacked a systematic plan and proved inadequate and suicidal rather than useful.[718] Nonetheless, Hochhuth also shows that Anne dies for what she believes is a real "moral", though not "religious", necessity: the burial of the dead, transformed into a political act which, thanks to Hochhuth's novella, will be remembered. By performing such a sacred duty and extreme action, Anne's life and death are invested

[717] According to Fornaro (2008), 26 n. 6, Hochhuth alludes here to Simone Weil's *Attente De Dieu*, "dove Antigone è presa ad illustrazione vivente di queste parole evangeliche".
[718] Fornaro (2012), 120.

with a moral and meaningful significance: she dies with serenity, "as a saint" (p. 17: "wie eine Heilige").

Anne's rebellion thus becomes an act of renunciation – a refusal of life, love, religion, because "only death can protect us". Unlike Sophocles' Antigone, Anne does not proclaim that she was "born to share in love and not in hatred" (523). The novella is dominated by her death and her extreme, brave act, moved by the desire to honour her brother at all costs. The "heroine" is ultimately defeated, but she achieves a moral victory over the injustice of society. Although instinctive and insufficient, Anne's act is transformed into an act of open resistance which shows that freedom and conscience cannot be coerced into submission by an oppressive authority.

3. Conclusion: *Antigone* and the Nazi Regime

The tragic climate of life in Berlin during the Second World War is evoked throughout Hochhuth's novella, which shows the inhumanity of the Nazi bureaucratic system. By citing Nazi terminology in quotation marks, Hochhuth calls into view the Nazi justice machinery (*Vernichtungsmaschinerie*).[719] Anne is, according to the penal system, a *Paket*, a package of flesh ready for state use. This term served to define, technically, "patients with low life expectancy" (p. 15: "Patienten mit geringer Lebenserwartung"), since a prisoner was "inexistent as legal entity, ready for decapitation and use of the body under monitored supervision" (p. 15: "als juristische Person abgebucht, zur Dekapitation und behördlich überwachten Kadavernutzung freigegeben"). In a Nazi world, common people were reduced to a state of *Animalität* or transformed into mere objects, "packages" or numbers.

The narrator specifies that prisoners received nothing to eat in their cell, intentionally over-heated, and they were not moved to the underground bomb shelters because it would have required a high number of staff and costs (p. 16, *Personalaufwand*). According to a law ("Verordnung vom 11. Mai 1937"), sentences of death and requests for mercy were processed only after a certain period of time, thus

[719] See Brennecke (1976), 331. As Fornaro (2012), 23, remarks: "Il tedesco, durante i lunghi e bui anni del nazismo, era stato deformato dalla dittatura, piegato ad espressioni burocratiche nuove o ad un gergo divenuto espressione dell'orrore."

prolonging the agony of the victims (p. 16). By contrast with the long wait, the final decision (the refusal of grace, the time of the execution) was communicated summarily and quickly, as a mere administrative procedure. The assembled eye-witnesses, sitting at a table with "schnapps and glasses" (p. 18: "Schnaps und Gläsern"), watched the execution. At the end of the novella, the author adds that the eye-witness of Anne's execution kept silent after the end of the war in order not to risk his pension (p. 18). Through his adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* Hochhuth was thus able to recall the atmosphere of hopeless inhumanity and perversity which pervaded the Nazi justice machinery. His work is a monument to all the nameless who, following their conscience, became victims of the Nazi *Vernichtungsmaschinerie*. Significantly, a 2,500-year-old tragedy is used to condemn the injustices of the recent past. Unlike Orff's apolitical version, Hochhuth demonstrates the political potential of updating the *Antigone* of Sophocles to a contemporary context and shows the tragic consequences of opposing the state once the *polis* ceases to be shared and represented by the community.

In his adaptation, the Chorus is absent and reduced to a number of characters which, unlike in other versions (such as Hasenclever and Brecht) do not rebel against authority. Hochhuth shows the courage of Anne, alter ego of Antigone, as opposed to the complicity and collaborationism of the masses. By contrast with the silent and passive crowd, Anne is determined to bury her brother and follow her conscience. Although she does not speak or voice her ideals, we experience her inner thoughts and fears throughout the novella. Her silent rebellion, although insufficient to change the reality, is indeed powerful and exemplary of the courageous sacrifice of nameless individuals in their everyday resistance to the regime. Anne's anonymous story is remembered and valued through this association with the "heroic" myth of Antigone and becomes a story of principled resistance.

Following the legacy of *Antigone*'s political tradition, initiated by Hölderlin and Hegel and culminated with Brecht, Hochhuth politicised the ancient play and set it within the context of Berlin 1945. Like Brecht, he showed that an Antigone-like act, if applied to the context of this time, is destined to fail but still represent an extreme, memorable, and brave act of resistance. The "old" story is made freshly accessible and updated in a provocative manner which tends towards a politicisation and clear

association with recent events. The divergences from the original reflect the author's intention to interrogate established views and to call into question the Nazi regime and its aftermath. *Antigone* is given an essential, political mission: it becomes necessary to uncover and remember the "uncomfortable" truth of history at a time when people wished to forget.

3.5. *Antigone*: Trends of Reception

In the twenty-first century, Sophocles' *Antigone* has been appropriated all around the world – from the United States, South America, and Africa – and has become established as the symbol of principled dissent against oppression and male authority. However, contemporary authors are no longer concerned with an evaluation of the Nazi regime and its aftermath: invoking a reaction against the Nazi oppression no longer makes sense in a modern context (and it has never been the main concern in many parts of the world). Thus, modern adaptations of *Antigone* open broader reflections on international politics. Although rooted in specific localised and historical circumstances (such as the Vietnam War, the Dirty War, and the apartheid), they comment on and vocalise the political, philosophical, and historical significances foreshadowed by the ancient play. As suggested by Judith Malina:

> As it yields to the sense of the contemporary politics, so ANTIGONE allows for an endless variety of production forms – the realistic, the surrealistic, the classical, the not-yet-dreamed-of – Antigone speaks with an ancient voice that is present wherever there is a willingness to speak out against conventional strictures and punitive laws, and to invoke the boundless human potential.[720]

3.5.1. The Aftermath of Brecht's *Antigone*

Although not successful at the time of its production,[721] Brecht's *Antigone* was appropriated years later in response to the urgency of political situations, thus contributing to establish the political features of the current interpretative model of *Antigone* – a play of political protest. A striking example is the experimental and innovative appropriation produced in 1967 by Judith Malina and Julian Beck, founders

[720] Malina (1990), vii.
[721] See section 3.4.1. of this thesis.

of the Living Theatre in New York.[722] Translator and director of the play, Malina decided to adapt Brecht's version in 1964, while she was in prison:

> I translated ANTIGONE in Passaic County Jail during the 30 days that I spent there for the refusing to surrender The Living Theatre on 14th Street to the assault police sent in by the government on the basis of charges that we owed the I.R.S. money … In jail I had available all the books I needed: Brecht, Sophocles in Greek and in several English translations, Hölderlin, German, Greek and English dictionaries, other reference works – all stacked below the metal shelf the prison called my bed – as well as the cooperation of my 6 cell-mates.[723]

Malina's production intended to instigate political change through Antigone's revolutionary example and to denounce imperialistic policies and social repression. It was explicitly conceived as a critique against war and established authority and it posited itself against the background of the Vietnam War. As Julian Beck, co-director of the Living Theatre, puts it:

> We did Antigone in 1967
> So that
> Antigone's example
> After 2500 years of failure
> Might at least move
> An intellectual paying audience
> To take action
> Before it is

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[722] See *Antigone* (1967), http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/1742. Accessed on 1 June 2018; Phelps (1967), 128-29; Guarino (2010), 46-9; Fischer-Lichte (2017), 238-41. Founded in 1947 in New York by Judith Malina and her husband Julian Beck, the Living Theatre promoted experimental techniques, improvisation, and radical politics. The company continues to perform today and aims at "rewriting the theatrical contract"; see http://www.livingtheatre.org/home. Accessed on 27 March 2018. Brecht's *Modellbuch* also inspired Claus Peymann's productions of the *Antigone* model in Berlin (1965) and Frankfurt (1966), as well as Benno Besson's *Oedipus Tyrant*, produced at the Deutsches Theater Berlin in 1967.

[723] Malina (1990), vi. See Rosenthal (2000), 73, on the charges against Malina.

too late
Don't talk. Do it.[724]

Beck played Creon and Malina Antigone. The directors made use of Brecht's 1951 *Modellbuch* and followed his instructions in regard to gesture, improvisation, alienation, and distancing techniques; they also added "corrections" to his text and incorporated Antonin Artaud's theories in their avant-garde, experimental production. The members of the Chorus were instructed to chant, hum, sing, dance, and they actively engaged with the public.[725] Neither the props nor the scenery was used on the empty stage, so that the attention was captured by the physical presence and movements of the actors alone, wearing their everyday clothes. The body of Polynices remained on the stage throughout the two and a half hours performance and Antigone mourned him "to the point where she lay over the body in a sexualized posture".[726] The presence of the body and the representation of violent acts onstage contrasted with the conventions of Greek drama and forced the audience to see the atrocities. Brecht's opening prologue was replaced by a ritualistic and kinetic dance, which reproduced the war between Thebes and Argos. This battle recalled the contemporary Vietnam War and was transformed into a political gesture, calling for pacifism and anarchism. The violence of the performance was expressed through the physicality of the acting on stage, characterised by screams and mimicry and described by a number of critics as "exorcist".[727]

The adaptation of the Living Theatre was a play of protest, political resistance, as well as conflict of gender.[728] It premiered in Krefeld, Germany, and it was then performed in sixteen different countries over the course of twenty years:

> Whenever we played it, it seemed to become the symbol of the struggle of that time and place – in bleeding Ireland, in Franco's Spain, in Poland a month

[724] Beck (1972), 66.
[725] See Guarino (2010), 48.
[726] Foley (2012), 136.
[727] See Fischer-Lichte (2017), 240.
[728] As Steiner (1984), 150, puts it, it is "the embodiment of a millennially outraged, patronised, excluded womanhood".

> before martial law was declared, clandestinely in Prague – the play is uncannily appropriate to every struggle for freedom.[729]

Although best understood against the background of the Vietnam War and the specific historical context of the 1960s, the Living Theatre's *Antigone* went beyond the boundaries of the local and parochial and was invested with a universal meaning. With this production, *Antigone* entered the international realm of politics.

The influence of Brecht's version in the modern reception of *Antigone* also extended to the realm of cinema. *Antigone* informed the German film *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978), which was produced few months after the "hot autumn" of 1977.[730] It was the product of a collaboration between writer Heinrich Böll and Alexander Kluge, as well as other prominent directors, including Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Edgar Reitz. It was produced after the murder of Hanns-Martin Schleyer (industrialist and former member of the SS) by the Red Army Faction and after the suicides of three Red Army leaders in the Stammheim prison.[731] The film is framed between Schleyer's funeral, shown at the beginning, and the terrorists' funeral, shown at the end, coded as "official versus transgressive, state-approved versus state-policed".[732] The latter funeral was permitted by the Mayor of Stuttgart, Manfred Rommel, despite the public opposition. He was the son of Marshal Erwin Rommel, who had been forced into suicide by Hitler in 1944. His official funeral is shown in the film and can be contrasted with that of Schleyer.[733]

The funeral of the terrorists is preceded by a satiric sketch dedicated to the Antigone theme and entitled *Die verschobene Antigone* ("The Postponed Antigone"). In this reworking, Böll and Schlöndorff employ Brecht's alienating techniques in order

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[729] Malina (1990), vii.
[730] See Böll (1978). Another film adaptation, based directly on Brecht, is the *Antigone* by Jean Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet (1991). See http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/2786. Accessed on 10 June 2018. See Michelakis (2004). On *Deutschland im Herbst*, see Elsaesser (2004); Blumenthal-Barby (2007); Capeloa Gil (2010), 311-19; Fornaro (2012), 141-51; Honig (2013), 68-82; Cairns (2016), 140-41.
[731] The so-called Baader-Meinhof group had been founded by student Andreas Baader and journalist Ulrike Meinhof, who, together with Jan-Carl Raspe, committed suicide.
[732] Honig (2013), 72.
[733] On the parallels between these funerals, see Blumenthal-Barby (2007), 159-61. Although Rommel's funeral is presented as a hero's burial, suicide was forced on him as traitor. The film thus complicates the simple patriot/traitor dichotomy.

to show the ideological workings of censorship and television. In this segment of the film, broadcasting executives discuss whether to transmit a production of *Antigone* for a series called *Youth Meets the Ancient Classics*. The "Broadcast Commission Meeting" devises three possible versions of "distancing verses", which recall Brecht's *Brückenverse*. They should precede the representation of the play and provide the audience with an explanation of what they are going to see. Significantly, the directors assume that an "uneducated" mass public would automatically misunderstand the tragedy, thus necessitating an explanation – which is revealed to be an ideological distortion. For example, the distancing verses suggested by the director explain that it is "inevitable" that some ancient works – such as *Antigone* – represent violence; they (the directors) nonetheless "take distance … from any form of violence".[734] The function of these and other similar verses is to distance the Sophoclean original from the current reality, breaking the illusion and avoiding the identification of Antigone with a "terrorist". Not only the suicides of Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin recall Antigone's death; Christiane Ensslin, in her attempt to provide a burial to her sister, resembles an Antigone figure.

However, the "distancing verses" have a sharply ironic effect: the directors themselves perceive that these repetitive explanations paradoxically reinforce the analogy with the current situation and its state of censorship. The directors eventually refuse to transmit the play in its original form on the ground that the parallels are too obvious and it will be misunderstood by young people as an "encouragement to subversion". Despite the repeated attempts to devise appropriate distancing verses, they conclude that it is not the right time to screen such a potentially subversive play and it is preferable to screen it in a different climate.

Significantly, Sophocles' *Antigone* is so influential that some of its central themes (such as the right of burial and mourning, political resistance and collaboration, the generational "curse" of Nazism, suicide and state funeral) are still relevant and too dangerous. Brecht had found in *Antigone* a model to represent the mechanisms of power and the violence of war in post-war Germany. *Die verschobene Antigone* exploits the ancient myth in a different context to represent the resistance of the

[734] See Böll (2009), 154-59.

individual against a state which is no longer Hitler's dictatorial regime but which still silences its opponents and enacts censorship through television and alienation. Both the Living Theatre's adaptation and the film *Deutschland im Herbst* demonstrate the current attraction of modern practitioners and directors to the Antigone theme, used as a model to express political critique at highly politically charged moments.

3.5.2. *Antigone* in Africa

A number of African adaptations of *Antigone* were produced in the twentieth century, such as Edward Kamau Brathwaite's *Odale's Choice* (first produced in 1962),[735] Athol Fugard's *The Island* (with John Kani and Winston Ntshona, 1973), Sylvain Bemba's Congolese version, *Noces posthumes de Santigone* (1988, translated as *Black Wedding Candles for Blessed Antigone* in 1990), Femi Òsófisan's Nigerian adaptation, *Tegonni: An African Antigone* (1994), and Koffi Kwahulé's *Bintou*, an adaptation from Côte d'Ivoire (1997). The revisioning of *Antigone* in African countries is the object of a number of recent studies.[736] For the purposes of my thesis, African adaptations are important because they are representative of the application of a "politicised" *Antigone*-model to a modern, multicultural context.

Many African plays re-politicise the ancient story and transform it into a play of principled resistance against tyranny, which is often identified with oppressive colonial occupation. They combine local tradition with Classical and Western traditions, thus problematising the "Western origin" of Greek myths and re-contextualising the original versions to a different, non-Western context.[737] Moreover, they tackle "local" concerns but, at the same time, they appeal to international audiences, in the attempt to raise awareness of important, "universal" issues – such as

[735] Brathwaite is a Caribbean artist but he lived in Ghana for several years.
[736] See Hardwick (2004), 233-42, on the "decolonisation" of Classics in Africa; Hardwick (2006), on Greek drama and "postcolonial diaspora"; Gibbs (2007), on productions of *Antigone* in Ghana; Goff and Simpson (2007) and Dominik (2007), on African rewritings of Greek tragedies; Van Zyl Smit (2007), on Greek drama in South Africa; Goff (2016), on adaptations of Greek dramas in West and South Africa. See also the overview of *Antigone*'s reception in Africa offered by Cairns (2016), 142-47.
[737] Non-Western adaptations challenge the cultural hegemony of the West and the "Eurocentric claims of ownership and authority"; Van Weyenberg (2014), 276.

the dominant racist ideology, the release of political prisoners, and the indifference of the masses to injustice.

For example, in Braithwaite's *Odale's Choice*, Creon is clearly represented as the tyrant and Antigone, renamed with the Africanised name Odale, represents the defiance of tyranny. Her "choice" is to refuse Creon's pardon and to die for her principles and for resisting oppressive authority. Although the names of the characters, except for Creon (whose name provocatively remains European), are Africanised, the play does not refer to a specific political situation or culture and its message of resistance can be applied to any African country.[738] Similarly, the message of Òsófisan's adaptation extends beyond the specific Nigerian situation, although there are allusions to the turmoil and military dictatorships which oppressed the country since its independence from Britain. Òsófisan's heroine significantly says that (p. 34): "anywhere where there is tyranny and oppression, there you will always find one Antigone rising up to challenge the tyrant and reduce his terrible power to dust".[739] Bemba's adaptation, too, shows this tension between "local" and "international". His *Santigone* premiered in New York in 1990 and was performed in Africa only in 1996.[740] The play is set in a Western context, in Birmingham, England. Here, an African student named Melissa Yadé plays the part of Antigone in a modern production. Once she finds out that her fiancée, a revolutionary leader of the fictious African country named "Amandla", has been killed in a coup promoted by the "New Leader", she returns to Amandla and attempts to provide him with a proper burial. The play intermingles African and Greek traditions, shifting across continents and cultures, showing that "communication between or across cultures is ... troubled and remarkably precarious".[741]

The case of Athol Fugard's pro-democratic version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, *The Island*, is also emblematic.[742] The play premiered during the apartheid, in 1973, at

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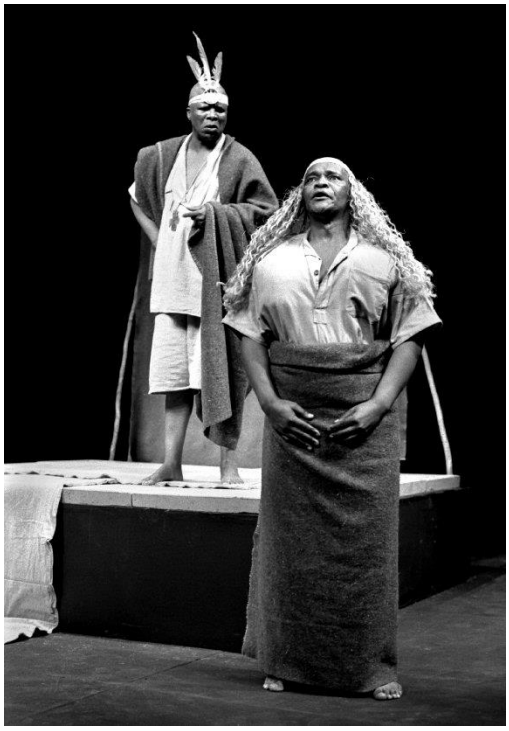
[738] See Dominik (2008), 119.
[739] Page numbers refer to Òsófisan (1999). On this version, see Goff (2007); Van Weyenberg (2010).
[740] See Wetmore (2002), 203-12; Simpson (2011).
[741] Simpson (2011), 335.
[742] It was inspired by a reading of the play by Nelson Mandela, prisoner for twenty-seven years on Robben Island during the apartheid regime. It was first performed under the title *Die Hodoshe Span* in order to avoid direct reference to the prison on Robben Island. This title referred to the nickname "Hodoshe", given to a notorious warder on the island. On this version, see Fugard (2002); Raji (2005), 139-43; Goff and Simpson (2007).

The Space, a theatre in Cape Town from which the notorious maximum security prison of Robben Island could be seen.[743] The historical immediacy of this production did not prevent it from surviving even after the end of the apartheid. Fugard's adaptation moved to the United Kingdom and to the States and it was then published by Oxford University Press.[744] The play engaged with universal themes of political freedom and human suffering which appealed to international audiences, thus becoming a tribute to all those who died to defy tyranny. A "local" South African production became relevant internationally and exerted considerable authoritative power in the world of white anglophony, denouncing the deficient sense of complicity of contemporary audiences.



[743] McDonald (2012), 644. Founded in Cape Town in 1972, The Space was a non-racial, alternative art venue and fringe theatre. Closed in 1979 for financial problems, it re-opened in 2008. On its genesis and history, see the account written by the founder Brian Astbury (2009), *Theatre of Survival. The Story of The Space:* https://theatreofsurvival.wordpress.com/2015/02/04/genesis/. Accessed on 28 March 2018.

[744] It was performed on Broadway in 1974, in Ireland in 1986, at the National Arts Festival in Grahams town in 1995, with the original cast (see illustration 15), in London at the Royal National Theatre in 2000 and at The Old Vic in 2002.

Fig. 15. John Kani and Winston Ntshona in *The Island*, May 1995. Goff and Simpson (2007), 306.

Like many African productions, Fugard's version evoked elements of both Anouilh's and Brecht's adaptations, thus proving the influence, even outside of Europe, of the politicised model of *Antigone* as a play of dissent and resistance. The protagonists of Fugard's version, John and Winston, rehearse an abbreviated version of the ancient myth entitled "The Trial and Punishment of Antigone", which they plan to perform in front of the other prisoners. This "play-within-the-play", in which John interprets Creon and Winston is Antigone, recalls Brecht's alienating techniques and *Verfremdungseffekt*.[745] In rehearsing the play, Winston interprets Antigone's role so freely that he deviates from the "official" script of the play and transforms the ancient story in his own *Antigone*. In doing so, Fugard cites Anouilh's *Antigone*: in this version, too, performed under a similar threat of censorship and oppressive regime, the heroine admits that she does not know why she is dying, and reveals that her role is simply a part of the performance that cannot be changed.[746]

Bemba's *Santigone* is also marked by a "Brechtian" metatheatricality. Not only the characters are rehearsing a production of Sophocles' *Antigone* (like in Fugard's version, although in Bemba's play the protagonists are women); the frequent interventions of a masked African Griot interrupt the story and allow for a metatheatrical discussion of the scene, characters, and roles.[747] The discussion about the characters' role-playing also recalls Anouilh's *Antigone*, in which each character is forced to fulfil a certain role to the bitter end. Like Fugard's Winston, Bemba's Melissa identifies with her role as "Antigone" in her inspired performance, even more

[745] At the beginning, Winston refuses to play the part of a woman, fearing that he will be humiliated, and only reluctantly takes on his role and wears a blond wig. On the "theatrical womanising" of Winston in Fugard's *Antigone* see Rehm (2007), 119-227; Cairns (2016), 144-45.
[746] The parallel with Anouilh's version is drawn by Fugard (2002), 134, himself who writes: "the front row of German officers had thought they were enjoying French culture" while "behind them Parisians received a political message of hope and defiance. So too on Robben Island the South African warders sat in front of the audience of prisoners". This is perhaps an oversimplification of Anouilh's apparently subversive *Antigone*, which emphasised the open-texture and ambiguity of the original rather than its politics of rebellion. See section 3.3.2.
[747] On the function of the Griot, see Simpson (2011), 327-28. In the final scene, the Griot informs the audience about the death of the heroine and other 130 passengers in a plane crash, thus keeping their memory alive and voicing their story.

when she finds out that her fiancé has been assassinated. The actress can no longer be distinguished from her role, to the point that she is called "Antigone" or "Mrs Melissa Antigone Bund".[748] Against the political violence of the regime and the enforced forgetting, she is determined to keep historical memory alive.In Òsófisan's version, the play's self-conscious metatheatricality allows for a discussion of Nigeria's history and struggle for independence from British imperialism. Assuming that this is her drama, a black Antigone-figure (a reincarnation of Sophocles' heroine) appears on the stage and acknowledges that (pp. 28-9): "It's just history about to repeat itself again"; "The script is the story we rehearsed, as it's happened at other times, in other places". The metatheatrical references to the "ubiquity" and "inevitability" of the story imply that an Antigone-like sacrifice will inevitably be repeated wherever the civil rights of man are tyrannised by an oppressive government.

Therefore, in African versions, Antigone's rebellion offers a model of emancipation from and resistance to authority. The performance itself becomes a political act of dissent, a "weapon … against the dominant racist ideology" (for example in Fugard's *The Island*).[749] In other instances, Antigone' fight for freedom is set in precolonial and postcolonial contexts and serves to denounce the abuses of power by Africans against Africans (for example, in Òsófisan's *Tegonni*).[750] The "African" Antigone claims her own, important role in the history of *Antigone*'s reception and becomes a vehicle for the assertion of political freedom.

3.5.3. *Antigone* in South America

Sophocles' *Antigone* became a popular play in South America in the twentieth century, a period marked by dictatorships and revolutions. It is especially popular in Argentina:

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[748] See Simpson (2011), 331.

[749] Silva (2017a), 460. In *The Island*, the collaboration between Athol Fugard, a white playwright, and two black actors, Winston Ntshona and John Kani, represented a dangerous and provocative act of defiance that violated the laws of apartheid, which imposed a limit on the hours of work that a white man could share with a black man in a week. See Mee and Foley (2011), 23.

[750] For example, Tegonni's brothers are killed in a civil war promoted by the British. Tegonni herself is threatened with torture (p. 130) and death (p. 78) because of her unconventional desire to become a bronze caster and sculptor, and the town disapproves of her marriage with a white man. The soldiers are represented in the play as Africans who are fighting other Africans, working for the British only because the British pay more than the African communities (pp. 32-3).

Fradinger argues that *Antigone* is Argentina's "national play".[751] Some examples include Leopoldo Marechal's *Antígona Vélez* (1951), Alberto de Zavalía's *El Limite* (1959), and Griselda Gambaro's *Antígona Furiosa* (1986). Other influential South American *Antigones* are David Cureses' Colombian *La cabeza en la jaula* (1987) and Juan Carlos Gene's *Golpes a mi puerta* (1988), set in a non-identified Latin-American region. Like African *Antigones,* the responses of South American versions to earlier politicised *Antigones* reveal a tension between "universal" and "local", which enable them to be "politically pertinent, even urgent, while maintaining the semblance of so-called universal appeal".[752] By voicing different political viewpoints that explicitly challenge established authorities, South American versions contribute to shape a highly modern, politicised *Antigone*.

Of all South American *Antigones*, Gambaro's Argentinian version is the most celebrated in Anglo-American criticism and it is the only one that has been translated into English.[753] Written after the author's exile, it premiered at the Goethe Institute in Buenos Aires in 1986.[754] The specific context of the 1970s and 1980s inspires Gambaro's political version. Her *Antigone* alludes both to the Dirty War (1974-83) and to the 1985 trials of the military responsible for the atrocities. Significantly, Gambaro's heroine refers to her "disappearance" (p. 152: "I will disappear from the world, alive") and is aware that she will die "a thousand times." Such a cyclical understanding of the Antigone story implies that the heroine will perform her act again and again. Gambaro pessimistically suggests that, even if the Dirty War has finished, an incessant circularity of never-ending rebellion and repression will continue to kill other Antigones. Together with her heroine, she wonders (p. 159): "Will there never be an end to this mockery? Brother, I cannot endure these walls I cannot see, this air that seals me in like stone … No, I refuse this bowl of mercy that masks cruelty". This

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[751] Fradinger (2011). See Silva (2017a), 419-23, for a brief overview of South American productions of *Antigone*. Nelli (2010), Fradinger (2014) and Biglieri (2016) offer more critical discussions of *Antigone*'s reception in South America.
[752] Taylor (1997), 172, in reference to Gambaro's *Antígona Furiosa*.
[753] Gambaro (1992), edited and translated by Feitlowitz. Page numbers refer to this edition. Fradinger (2011), 67, remarks that "Gambaro's play is the only Latin American *Antigone* that has been translated into another language *tout court*". On Gambaro's version, see also Fleming (1999); Wannamaker (2001).
[754] Gambaro was indicted into exile in Spain in 1977 because of her critical novel *Ganarse la muerte* (1976). The Goethe Institute in Buenos Aires is "itself a significant place, in that the Institute is more marginal than the traditional national theatres where the previous *Antígonas* had been performed, hosting more experimental art and forums for public debate"; Fradinger (2011), 76.

is a clear reference to the trial of the military involved in the Dirty War. Although the trial "excused" many of the crimes committed, Gambaro, through her play, claims that the brutal violence of the military Junta cannot be easily forgiven nor forgotten. Her Antigone asserts, like Sophocles' Antigone, (p. 159): "I was born to share love, not hate" (523). But she adds, after a long pause: "But hate rules … the rest is silence!"[755] Gambaro's Antigone is thus an angry, "furious" Antigone who, like Argentine resisters, protests against the silence and acceptance of the population, passive victims of the regime as a consequence of tyranny and terror.

Argentinian versions of *Antigone* are not only inspired by the politics and repressive context of civil strife and dictatorship recently faced by Argentina during the Dirty War. A number of twentieth-century Argentinian rewritings use the play to confront previous moments of Argentine history – such as the revolutions for independence and civil wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – and to explore "the conflict between civilisation and barbarism".[756] For example, Marechal's play, written during Perón's regime, is set in the early nineteenth century, during the Christian conquest of Argentina and the extermination of the semi-nomadic indigenous people who lived there. In this version, Ignacio, Antígona Vélez's brother, is left unburied by Don Facundo Galván, alter-ego of Creon.[757] Antigone refuses to obey his orders and "is condemned to death, riding on horseback against the Indians" together with Lisandro Galván, alter-ego of Haemon.[758]

Zavalía's version, too, is set in nineteenth-century Argentina and is inspired by the legend of Doña Fortunata García, "who in 1841 dared defy one of Rosas's *caudillo*s, General Oribe, in the northern city of Tucumán, where the nation's independence was signed in 1816".[759] The Colombian adaptation by Cureses, *La cabeza en la jaula,* is also set in the nineteenth century and explores the irreconcilable

[755] This could be a reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Prince Hamlet's last words are: "the rest is silence". Other citations from Shakespeare can be detected in Gambaro's play: the first lines spoken by Antígona recall the lines sung by Ophelia in *Hamlet* as she finds out that her brother is dead (p. 137): "He is dead and gone, lady … At his head a grass-green turf / At his heels a stone." See Wirshing (2009), 101.
[756] Biglieri (2016), 348.
[757] The name "Facundo" intentionally recalls Facundo Quiroga, "the quintessential 'barbaric *caudillo*'"; see Fradinger (2011), 72.
[758] Biglieri (2016), 355.
[759] Fradinger (2011), 75.

opposition between the Americans' resistance and the Spaniards' domination, interpreted as an antithesis between freedom and oppression, civilisation and barbarism.

What all these *Antigones* have in common is the politicisation of the ancient story and the emphasis on the history of violence lived by South America, from the nineteenth century to the present day. Antigone becomes the exemplary mourning female figure who risks her life and disobeys the laws of a tyrannical state in order to defend the dead. South American versions highlight the conflict between freedom and tyranny and display a broader, "universal" appeal to fight against the "barbarism" of tyranny. Once more, the parallels with the contemporary situation transform the ancient *Antigone* into an *Antigone* of the present. The ancient story is historicised and politicised, thus becoming a vehicle to express a political protest against oppression and tyranny.

3.5.4. Feminist and Philosophical Readings of *Antigone*

Perhaps most than any other Greek tragedy, *Antigone* has fascinated philosophers of modernity, to the extent that Taxidou speaks of the "philosophisation" of *Antigone*,[760] which began with Hegel's influential interpretation. We could also speak of *Antigone*'s "feministisation": the play has been repeatedly appropriated by contemporary feminist criticism in the twentieth and twenty-first century.[761] This is because gender has a crucial centrality in *Antigone*, in which gender roles and kinship ties (brotherhood and sisterhood) are scrutinised. Antigone pursues her death instead of marriage and rejects the authority of her closest male relative, Creon, thus subverting traditional feminine expectations.

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[760] Taxidou (2004), 19. With this expression, Taxidou refers to the tendency to view *Antigone* as a "philosophical text" on its own, without acknowledging its performative and theatrical dimension. See also Wilmer's and Žukauskaitė (2010)'s book on *Antigone* in postmodern thought, which has many chapters on psychoanalytical and feminist appropriations of the play. Griffith (2010) "psychoanalyses" Antigone and explores the possible psychological responses generated by the play.

[761] On feminist readings of *Antigone* see Leonard (2005); Söderbäck (2010); Hutchings and Pulkkinen (2010). See also Zajko and Leonard (2006) on the role of classical myth in feminist thocught; Goldhill (2012), 231-48, on the role of sisterhood. See also the account of *Antigone*'s influence in feminist and philosophical discourses in Cairns (2016), 129-32.

However, in order to explain the current attraction to *Antigone* in feminist and philosophical analyses, it is necessary to take into account Hegel's reading of the play, which is the target of a wide range of feminist, psychoanalytical, and queer-theoretical approaches. As Goldhill recognises, "*Antigone* has become a set-text for feminist political analysis in particular as a response to Hegel and the German tradition."[762] Because of Hegel's partisan interpretation of the play, feminist readings have questioned the appropriateness of *Antigone* as feminist icon.

Not only Hegel, but also Lacan's reading of *Antigone* is the object of criticism in modern feminist and philosophical readings of the play. Central to Lacan's reading in his *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (1959-60) is the idea that Antigone does not represent the family nor the rebellion of the individual against the state.[763] Rather, she is representative of the ethical fulfilment of the individual's inner and pure desire. She acts ethically insofar as she pursues "the pure and simple desire of death as such",[764] rather than conforming to the laws of the state, embodied by Creon. She dies heroically and she is thus "splendid",[765] by contrast with Creon's unheroic and humane stance, who ignores or gives up his own desires. Thus, in Lacan's reading, Antigone has a major centrality whereas the Antigone-Creon conflict (and its Hegelian dialectic) is neglected. Lacan highlights Antigone's "desire" rather than her rebellious voice, and places her act outside of the political context of the drama and her opposition against Creon. By decontextualising the original drama and by giving a heroic image of Antigone removed from the political, Lacan offers a depoliticised reading of *Antigone*.

His "depoliticizing gesture",[766] in turn, opened up various responses from feminist critics. Not only his lack of focus on politics, but also his reading of Antigone's desire as "pure", already corroborated by Hegel's insistence on the purity of Antigone's relationship with her brother, proved problematic because of Antigone's

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[762] Goldhill (2012), 139.
[763] These theories were first explained in three seminars in 1960, published in 1986. On Lacan's reading of *Antigone*, see Leonard (2005), 101-30; Miller (2007); Buchan (2012). In his reading of *Antigone*, Lacanian philosopher Slavoj Žižek (2000), 672, refers to Antigone's transgression as the incarnation of the "ethics of the Real", a kind of ethics which stems from the individual and not from the "predominant notion of the good" and the laws of the community.
[764] Lacan (1992), 282.
[765] Lacan (1992), 321: "She has a quality that both attracts us and startles us, in the sense of intimidates us; this terrible, self-willed victim disturbs us." On Lacan's idealisation of Antigone, see Buchan (2012), 494; 500-3.
[766] Leonard (2006), 123.

incestuous (and thus) impure genealogy. Both Luce Irigaray, Lacan's former student,[767] and Jacques Derrida challenged Hegel's and Lacan's readings of the play, which they considered reductive and misleading interpretations of the female sex. They questioned the neutrality of the western philosophical discourse and the implications of its Hegelian and Lacanian inheritance.

In his *Glas* (1974), Derrida discredited Hegel's and Lacan's interpretations and idealisation of *Antigone*, behind which he detected an essential exclusion and inequality of gender.[768] Against the Hegelian idea of a "pure" brother-sister relationship, deprived of struggle, and against Lacan's insistence on the purity of Antigone's ethical desire, Derrida emphasised that "a sexual difference is still necessary".[769] Antigone is a "sister" but she is also a woman. If relegated to her role as "sister", she "holds herself suspended between a desire she does not experience, of which she experiences that she does not experience it, and a universal law (non-familial, human, political etc.) that stays foreign to her".[770] Derrida points out that, in Hegel's and Lacan's readings "the man who goes out of the home … into civil society, has the right to desire, but also the freedom to control that desire", whereas Antigone does not.[771] In his *Glas*, Derrida also attacks Hegel's philhellenism, which he identifies as essentially anti-Semitic: the superiority of the Greeks, characterised by freedom and citizenship, is opposed to the Jews' servitude, to the point that "in the Hegelian system the Greeks function precisely as the anti-Jews".[772]

In the same year of Derrida's *Glas*, Irigaray published *Spéculum de l'autre femme* (1974), in which she fully re-politicised Antigone and reaffirmed her role in the realm of consciousness and politics. For Irigaray, in Hegel's interpretation, Antigone is unable to be aware of her ethical act because of her gender. Irigaray cites an Hegelian passage from his *Philosophy of Nature* in which the female body is presented as

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[767] Irigaray was expelled from Lacan's *École Freudienne* because of her work *Spéculum*, which was her doctoral thesis. See Leonard (2005), 130. On Irigaray's reading, see Chanter (1995), 80-126; Leonard (2005), 100-1; 130-35; Leonard (2006), 134-39.
[768] On Derrida's reading, see especially Leonard (2005), 135-56.
[769] See Derrida (1986), 149.
[770] See Derrida (1986), 149.
[771] Derrida (1986), 164.
[772] Leonard (2005), 152.

"passive" whereas "the male is the active principle".[773] According to Irigaray, this vision of sexual biology informs Hegel's reading of *Antigone* as well, whereby Antigone is representative of the family or ethical sphere and is denied consciousness, because the family is "the inner indwelling principle of sociality operating in an unconscious way",[774] whose consciousness only emerges in the moment of dialectic transition.

However, for Hegel, the family and the state are bound to each other and, because they are equally interdependent, they are both "political" and "ethical".[775] Hegel claims that both opposite laws "contain[s] that [ethical] substance in its entirety, and contain[s] all moments of its contents".[776] In Hegel's reading, the spirit can progress only if "both sexes overcome their merely natural being, and become ethically significant".[777] Thus, the divine law "finds its realization … it comes through consciousness to have existence and efficacy".[778] In Hegel's reading, Antigone, too, becomes fully aware of the implications of her act: she commits the crime "wittingly" (*wissentlich*)[779] and "the play as a whole … represents a further stage in the development of ethical self-consciousness".[780]

Judith Butler also opposed a caricature of a Hegelian view of the play, according to which state and family are opposed to each other and according to which Antigone's desire for her brother is pure. Against Hegel, Butler argued that Antigone cannot be identified with "the family" precisely because of her incestuous origin, which undermines the purity of her attachment to her brother, and because she renounces her role of wife and mother and sacrifices everything for her dead brother. Antigone's "politics" is not "of oppositional purity but of the scandalously impure".[781] On the contrary, Butler sees Antigone as "not quite a queer heroine",[782] but

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[773] Hegel (1970), 175, cited by Irigaray (1985), 214. See also Irigaray (2004) and discussion in Chanter (1995), 83.
[774] Hegel (2001), 262. See Leonard (2005), 96-100, for a discussion of Hegel and the ethics of consciousness.
[775] See section 2.2.2. of this thesis. This refutes Butler's argument too; see below.
[776] Hegel (2001), 262.
[777] Hegel (2001), 270.
[778] Hegel (2001), 271.
[779] Hegel (2001), 279.
[780] Leonard (2015), 104.
[781] Butler (2000), 76.
[782] Butler (2000), 2.

nonetheless as someone who does not conform to patriarchal expectations. She refuses to marry Haemon and speaks "in the name of politics and the law", absorbing "the very language of the state against which she rebels".[783] For Butler, Antigone's "claim" and rebellion are political and stem from the recognition of the "human universals" of morality and right to mourn. However, Antigone's claim ultimately fails, she cannot be identified with the family and she "cannot make her claim outside the language of the state, but neither can the claim she wants to make be fully assimilated by the state".[784]

Recent scholarship has criticised Butler's approach.[785] Leonard points out that, "in her opposition to Hegel … [Butler] embraces a universalism antithetical to her feminist message".[786] She implies that Antigone's act is neither fully ethical nor political because "it originates in an appeal to an imperative that seems to transcend the sphere of politics" – the right to mourn her brother.[787] However, Antigone's claim cannot be set apart from political considerations and consequences because the family is already ethical and political.

The Antigone portrayed by Derrida, Irigaray, and Butler stands in opposition to the "pure" and "splendid" Antigone praised by Hegel and Lacan. As Lacan claims, "everybody is Hegelian without knowing it".[788] Although *Antigone* cannot be experienced outside of those Hegelian readings, feminist readings have nonetheless attempted to re-claim Antigone's political role and re-appropriate Sophocles' female heroine as a fundamentally political subject, challenging what Leonard calls the "phallogocentric bias of both the Hegelian and Lacanian readings".[789] Contemporary philosophical and feminist interpretations have highlighted the kinship of Antigone, her ability to overthrow the patriarchal order, and the political nature of her claim and

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[783] Butler (2000), 76.
[784] Butler (2002), 28.
[785] See Taxidou (2004); Honig (2013), 41-50; Leonard (2015), 125-28. Taxidou's reading highlights the difficulties of supporting a feminist reading of *Antigone* by drawing attention to the dramatic convention of theatre and actors – in particular, the convention of men-playing-women, so that women are "always represented, but never present"; Taxidou (2004), 10.
[786] Leonard (2015), 128. Leonard criticises the "universalist tendencies" of modern philosophical approaches to tragedy.
[787] Leonard (2015), 127.
[788] Lacan (1988), 93, cited in Leonard (2005), 133.
[789] Leonard (2006), 122.

rebellion, thus contributing to the politicisation of Sophocles' *Antigone* in a modern context.

3.5.5. Conclusion

Today, *Antigone* is a global phenomenon. The worldwide reception of Sophocles' play in this century shows the malleability of the ancient play and its potential to transcend spatial-temporal borders. In response to the urgency of different political situations, *Antigone* has been adapted in South America, Haiti, Mexico, the USA, as well as Africa and Japan, and her voice has become established as the voice of radical resistance.[790] In a certain cultural and geographical context, dramatists have revisited notions of canon and tradition and asserted their own, different value systems, so that "Antigone no longer belongs to Europe exclusively."[791] Ranging from the United States, Africa, and South America, I have shown some of the ways in which the Antigone story has mirrored modern day issues and the ways in which its performance alone has become a political act of protest. In particular, non-Western versions highlighted the political aspects of the original, in response to the colonial weight which *Antigone* (a "Western" play) represents and in response to specific antecedents such as Anouilh and Brecht.

Feminist and philosophical readings also demonstrate the extent to which Sophocles' *Antigone* is relevant today. *Antigone* is not a feminist tragedy, but it has activated discussions centred on gender, women's rights, and their political role in society. Modern philosophical discourses explore the ideological repercussions of Hegel's interpretation and question the Western appropriation of Antigone as the feminist heroine par excellence. If there are elements of such feminist appropriation that are in fact grounded in (supposedly) anti-democratic and autocratic discourses, can the *Antigone* still be representative of feminist politics? Modern philosophers continue to engage with the *Antigone* and ask questions about the significance of her act for kinship norms and ways of organising sexuality.

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[790] A comprehensive analysis of *Antigone*'s mobilisation on the modern world stage is not the object of the present study, which has focused on a number of selected examples. For further, see Mee and Foley (2011).
[791] Van Weyenberg (2014), 264.

The afterlife of the play in Europe, all around the world, and in the feminist-philosophical tradition demonstrates the continuous appeal of the *Antigone* story and its applicability to political circumstances as they recur through history. Modern adaptations show how effectively the *Antigone* has been used to communicate political messages, local and global concerns, as well as timeless questions which reveal a tension between innovation and tradition, self-conscious distancing from and questioning of the original. Such dynamics do not only contribute to the development of political drama, questioning the role of a Western classical heritage in African and American cultures and in modern feminist and philosophical discourses. They also reveal important aspects of the original – its political fluidity and applicability to different, current situations – and the modern culture that receives it.

4. Conclusions

This study has explored the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in twentieth-century Europe and has investigated the process by which *Antigone* became established as a canonical drama of political resistance, representative of principled dissent to arbitrary and autocratic authority. I have argued that *Antigone*'s relevance in our contemporary world is a consequence of the variety of political and philosophical interpretations developed around the ancient play in the nineteenth century. Prior to this critical tradition, authors contaminated Sophocles' *Antigone* with later reworkings of the myth and neglected the political aspects in favour of an emphasis on Christian and Romantic features. In particular, Hölderlin's and Hegel's influential interpretations paved the way for later versions which emphasised the rhetoric of protest and revolt of the Sophoclean original.

Moreover, I have shown that the current appeal to the Antigone story is due to the malleability and topicality of the original itself and what Steiner calls "specific universals transformative across the ages"[792] – general issues dramatised in the original that can be applied to different contexts. The political themes inherent to the Sophoclean play, which resonate across space and time, the political and philosophical tradition initiated by Hegel and Hölderlin, as well as the variety of political readings specifically created in post-Hölderlinian and Hegelian reception as a response to and interaction with the history of the twentieth century have shaped the defining features of a "politicised" *Antigone* that endures to this day.

Furthermore, I have selected, compared, and contextualised a number of influential versions produced in the twentieth century, investigating how they reflected, departed from, or reconfigured the original. These versions have been chosen because of their specificity and political relevance in a certain historical and geographical context and because they are representative of political and innovative ways of engaging with the Sophoclean original. Not only has my study emphasised that *Antigone* can transcend geographical, historical, and ideological contingencies, but it has also showed some of the distinctive ways in which the play has been mobilised,

[792] Steiner (1984), 138.

politicised, and depoliticised in response to contemporary political debates in landmark historical moments. By contextualising these versions, analysing the divergences from the original, and heightening the focus on the political aspects, I have given a new, politically-oriented interpretation of *Antigone*'s reception in the twentieth century.

My political approach to the reception of Sophocles' tragedy has significant advantages. First, I have expanded the account of *Antigone*'s reception provided by Cairns in his book Sophocles' *Antigone*, by offering a detailed and nuanced picture of *Antigone*'s politicisation in the twentieth century and by identifying the origin of the current interpretative model of *Antigone* as a play of political resistance. Second, I have clarified the ideologies and contexts which influenced the process of politicisation of the ancient play. I have shown that the majority of productions occurred in conjunction with significant political and historical changes, such as the Russian Revolution, the First World War, and the Second World War. Moreover, by focusing on a number of iconic versions that followed and reacted to the First and Second World Wars, I have shown that, in the twentieth century, *Antigone* has become a canonical play for the expression of steadfast and outspoken opposition.

Most twentieth-century authors powerfully modified the original and exploited its political and subversive potential, such as Hasenclever and Sérgio, whose versions were written in different but similar historical circumstances, under the reign of Wilhelm II in Germany and Salazar's dictatorship in Portugal. In turn, Cocteau's abridged and apolitical version represents an exception in the contemporary trend of politicisation of the *Antigone*: the author did not emphasise the political aspects but rather the speed which he already saw in the original and his own aesthetic rebelliousness. Overall, the Greek myth provided authors with a platform to comment on contemporary events and to discuss openly – even though indirectly – crucial political issues, in a time when censorship was widespread.

However, I have not discussed exclusively adaptations in which *Antigone* is presented as a freedom fighter. Rather, I have explored versions in which the ancient tragedy is used to promote ideals of heroism and superiority and further reinscribe elitist aims and prejudices. In particular, I have considered the play's reception in the politics of National Socialism and the implications of depoliticising *Antigone* in this

period. For example, I have shown that, precisely because they intentionally ignored the play's anti-authoritarian potential, both Heidegger's and Orff's apolitical interpretations proved political and suited Nazi aesthetic and political dictates. Honegger (in the 1943 revival) and Anouilh also emphasised the inherent ambiguities and open texture of the original in order to avoid reprisal in the politically charged context of Nazi occupied France.

With Brecht's iconic adaptation, *Antigone* became established as the symbol of conscientious resistance against autocratic oppression and was automatically associated with the Resistance by later authors. For example, Hochhuth exploited the ancient tragedy to commemorate German resistance fighters and denounce the atrocities of the Nazi regime, thus politicising the Sophoclean myth. The association of *Antigone* with political resistance is also evident in the reception of the play after Brecht, as I have shown in the last part of my thesis. Later readings and interpretations emphasised the political aspects of Sophocles' *Antigone*, its discourses of resistance and civil strife, but they also emphasised their applicability and resonance all over the world.

Overall, my case studies exemplify the implications of politicising and depoliticising *Antigone* in the period that followed the First and Second Word Wars. The adaptations I focus on are important because they show the extent to which *Antigone*'s reception is informed by politics, ideologies, and previous traditions. A comparative perspective helped me to underline, for each case study, common tendencies and iconic responses to Sophocles which are influenced by political-cultural shifts occurred in the twentieth century and by more or less conscious responses to the earlier philosophical readings of the play. The variety of interpretations, from poets, philosophers, practitioners, feminist, and gender interpreters reveals the immediacy and relevance of *Antigone* in this century and demonstrates that Sophocles' play does not belong to a single place and time and that its story cannot be regarded as "universal".[793] Rather, the ancient drama speaks to "any corner of the world where the human spirit has been oppressed, where people sit in jail because of their fight for human dignity, for freedom."[794] Today, authors are

[793] Cairns (2016), 154.
[794] John Kani quoted in Mee and Foley (2011), 6.

continuously enlisted to write, imagine and stage new versions of *Antigone* around the world and the *Antigone* proves to be a remarkably flexible medium for the expression of different social and political agendas.

Furthermore, my study has combined the political aspects of *Antigone*'s reception with an analysis of the text and the divergences of modern versions from the original. Through a textual analysis of Sophocles' tragedy, it is possible to examine new ways of approaching the original, which show a tension between fidelity and distance, respect and reverence for the original and the need to update it to a contemporary context. In the introduction of their volume on *Antigone* in performance, the editors Mee and Foley remark that there is often an implicit assumption that the so-called "original" is superior, and adaptations are often analysed in too narrow terms of "fidelity" to the original text.[795] However, my text-based approach to *Antigone*'s reception has demonstrated the importance of the text and its role in shaping the modern understanding of the original, taking the translation used in each case and the engagement with the original text as main reference points. I have analysed twentieth-century versions that remain close to the original, but I have also discussed versions that show an especially great licence to invent and depart from the original story. Authors (especially in the second part of the twentieth century) have changed the name, setting, and role of the characters, while deliberately preserving certain lines and emblematic exchanges which generally coincide with the Sophoclean original. My textual approach has thus shed light on the reasons why authors incorporate and assimilate certain emblematic terms and echoes from Sophocles as opposed to what has been reconfigured or is absent.

Through a literary and political approach, my study has contributed to enhancing our understanding of *Antigone*'s reception and relevance in the present day. The powerful productions analysed in this thesis – Hasenclever's, Cocteau's, Sérgio's, Brecht's, Anouilh's, Hochhuth's, Fugard's and others – provide examples of the way *Antigone* has been used to challenge repressive governments and dictators or to generate discussion about the individual's relationship to society. My analysis corroborates the view that what these plays have in common is the ability to

[795] Mee and Foley (2011), 11.

articulate modern issues and comment on political matters through the ancient myth in a pre- or post-war background.

In turn, studying the reception of the *Antigone* in the twentieth century has given rise to the question of the extent to which the Sophoclean original is in itself inherently political and has a clear political agenda. Sophocles' *Antigone* is "thoroughly political",[796] but it originally was not intended as a subversive play. However, its political aspect, already present in the archetypical figure of a woman who, alone, defies the authority of the State, has been uncovered by playwrights and directors who, at highly politically charged moments, have transformed the Theban princess into a freedom fighter for human rights. Many of the modern versions are rooted in a specific historical moment but they also become universal, timeless classics on their own, demonstrating anew the tension between "historicising" and "universalising".

In the study of the reception of Greek tragedy there is a continuous tension between time-specific challenges and long-lasting, universal issues. Sophocles' *Antigone* has exerted considerable influence both across history and within history, in the situatedness of specific contexts. Neither historicism ("the view that we can know the past as it really was, untainted by what came after") nor presentism ("the view that everything is wholly adapted to what we think in the present")[797] can explain the enduring effect of Greek tragedy upon readers and practitioners. If the story of Antigone is told again and if it becomes political, it is because of these influential versions (among others), as well as the authoritative Hegelian readings; but it is also because *Antigone* "becomes – sadly – meaningful, again and again, to express the horror of the unburied dead, the costs of civil war, the wrack of atrocity, and the work of the survivors, so often women, who come after looking to bury the dead".[798] Oppressive circumstances and restrictions have not at all limited the current attraction to the ancient myth; rather, they have stimulated political responses and underscored the play's relevance in the last century.

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[796] Cairns (2016), 154.
[797] Hopkins and Martindale (2012), 5.
[798] Lane (2007), 523.

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